



# THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

This thesis has been submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for a postgraduate degree (e.g. PhD, MPhil, DClinPsychol) at the University of Edinburgh. Please note the following terms and conditions of use:

This work is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights, which are retained by the thesis author, unless otherwise stated.

A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge.

This thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the author.

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the author.

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given.

# Giving Voice to an Embodied Self:

A heuristic inquiry into experiences of healing through vocal creativity

Sarah Quinley

Doctor of Psychotherapy and Counselling

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

2019

## **Thesis Declaration**

I confirm that this thesis, presented to the University of Edinburgh for the degree of

Doctor of Psychotherapy and Counselling, has

i) been composed entirely by myself

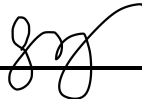
ii) been solely the result of my own work

iii) not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification

This Declaration is signed the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May upon final submission.

**X**

Sarah Quinley



## Abstract

How is the voice healing? Over the past few decades, research has begun to uncover the therapeutic benefits of vocal practices. Research results have evidenced that different forms of vocal expression positively influence the quality of life of an adult emotionally, mentally, physically, psychologically, and spiritually. However, different theoretical approaches, different methods, and different samples have left a heterogeneous picture of the reported benefits. It remains unclear *how* individuals experience healing through vocal practices, nor do we know much about the qualities that characterise each practice. This research aims to explore how individuals experience healing and transformation through different vocal practices, including therapeutic voicework, creative singing, and performance singing. In this study, these vocal practices are grouped under the term ‘vocal creativity’. The research problem was formulated with the following question: *What is the nature and meaning of experiences of vocal creativity, and what can these experiences tell us about the human voice’s potential for healing?*

To reveal the elements of each vocal practice, and the mechanisms behind individuals’ experiences of healing through the voice, this study adopts a heuristic methodology to yield in-depth findings. More specifically, a heuristic comparison study was undertaken to draw out features that characterise each practice and the therapeutic benefits different forms of vocal creativity have in common. As an additional way to gain knowledge and present key findings, I created songs and lyrical poems to access an embodied understanding of individuals’ experiences. To generate data, I engaged my experience of vocal creativity and conducted conversational interviews. Some of my autobiographical contributions were analysed integrating Process-Experiential Theory to produce a richer understanding of how I have healed and transformed through vocal creativity. The ten respondents of the conversational interviews were

men and women, aged between 25-67 years old, from the United States, England, and Spain. The present study provides important insights into the significance of the voice for healing that may be useful for practitioners both within, and outwith, the arts therapies. Integration of vocal creativity and Process-Experiential Theory elaborates on Emotion-Focused Therapy and expands the theoretical base for vocal practices, suggesting that using the voice as an embodied and symbolic tool for emotion may assist in the facilitation of emotional processing, and in working with internal multiplicity. The study's findings illuminate underlying qualities, processes, and mechanisms in experiences of vocal practices, and elucidate contexts and conditions that enabled or inhibited ways of healing through the voice, all of which are seldom addressed in current scholarship.

## **Acknowledgments**

I have many people to thank for helping me complete this project. I am so grateful to the individuals who helped fund my education and made it possible for me to pursue this amazing opportunity. A wholehearted thank you to my Mom, Dad, Jim, Nancy, Grandma Denny, Lin, Mary Kay, and many others for supporting my educational journey.

Mom, thanks for being there for all my ups and downs. Having you to stick by me has been such a blessing and I am forever grateful for that.

Nan, I could not have done this without you. You've been my rock and my best friend through this journey. Thank you so much for being there through everything.

Huge thanks to my partner, Alberto, for being a massive support throughout this challenging process and for believing in me every step of the way.

A special thank you to my friends who made me laugh and encouraged me.

To my therapist, Kate, who I can't thank enough for helping me come back to my voice, value it, and trust it.

Thanks to Lady Gaga who was a huge inspiration and support throughout this project. Her message and example helped me be strong, be proud of my voice, and embrace the uniqueness of my personal evolution.

Thank you to my supervisors, Alette and Seamus, to whom I owe much of the success of this project.

Thanks to my co-researchers who took the time to speak with me and gave so much life to this research.

I am indebted to you all for everything you have done for me to complete this doctoral journey.

## **Dedication**

This project is dedicated to my great grandma, Donna Jean (DJ), whose presence in my life will always be an inspiration and loving memory. I also dedicate this work to any person who longs for vocal freedom and who loves to sing.

## Table of Contents

Thesis Declaration.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Acknowledgments.....	v
Dedication.....	vi
Table of Contents.....	vii
List of Tables & Figures.....	xii
Supplemental Files.....	xiii
Key Concepts & Terms.....	xiv
Chapter 1: A Call for Response .....	1
1.2: Introducing my Personal Voice.....	3
1.3: A Collective Composition.....	5
1.4: The ‘Call’ of the Research.....	7
1.5: Setting the Stage.....	8
Chapter 2: A Search for Silence .....	10
Part 1: Exploring Clinical Contexts.....	10
2.2: The Clinical Field of Music Therapy.....	10
2.3: Voicework in Psychotherapy.....	15
Pioneers of Voicework .....	16
2.4: Voicework in Other Arts Therapies.....	23
Dance and Movement Therapy.....	23
Dramatherapy.....	26
Intermodal Expressive Arts Therapy.....	30



Part 2: A Search Through Non-Clinical Contexts.....	31
2.5: Singing for Health and Wellbeing Studies.....	31
Large Studies and Systematic Reviews.....	32
Choral Singing.....	32
Singing and Mental Health Studies.....	33
Studies Focused on Healing through Singing.....	34
Physiological Studies.....	36
Theoretical Perspectives of the Experience of Singing for Health and Wellbeing.....	36
2.6: Filling the Silent Gaps.....	37
Chapter 3: Philosophical Tunings.....	39
3.2: Locating the Study in Psychotherapy.....	39
3.3: Ontology and Epistemology.....	40
3.4: Embodied Phenomenology .....	42
Chapter 4: Methodology and Design.....	47
4.2: Moustakas' Heuristic Method.....	47
4.3: Designing a Heuristic Comparison.....	51
4.4: Individual Depictions: The Verses of the Soloists and the Duet.....	53
The Verses of the Soloists.....	53
The Duet.....	54
4.5: Composite Depictions: The Choruses.....	57
4.6: Creative Synthesis: The Song.....	57

4.7: Lyrical Poems and Songs as Inquiry.....	58
4.8: Navigating my Heuristic Journey.....	59
4.9: Methods.....	61
Self-Dialogue.....	61
Workshops.....	61
Co-Researchers.....	62
Interviews.....	63
4.10: Trustworthiness.....	66
4.11: Ethical Considerations.....	68
Chapter 5: The Collective Composition.....	73
5.2: Self Dialogue: Embarking on a Vocal Journey into an Embodied Self.....	75
5.3: Therapeutic Voicework.....	77
Daniel: Connecting Beyond Words.....	77
Susan: Beyond Reclaiming the Joyful Self.....	80
Jennifer: Trusting the Voice.....	83
The Chorus of the Therapeutic Voiceworkers.....	86
5.4: The Creative Singers.....	88
Morgan: Singing from the Nucleus.....	88
Diana: Empowered by Sound.....	91
Phoebe: In the Voice, Revealed.....	94
The Chorus of the Creative Singers.....	97
5.5: The Performance Singers.....	99
Simon: Voices of the Theatrepist.....	99

Nero: Befriending the Music Within.....	103
Rex: Intimate Harmonies.....,	105
Gilly: The Sum is Greater Than Its Parts.....	107
The Chorus of the Performance Singers.....	109
5.6: Outro: A Felt Sense of Something to A Felt Shift.....	111
The Duet.....	112
5.7: Creative Synthesis: The Song.....	122
Chapter 6: Exposition.....	124
6.2: Identified Qualities, Mechanisms and Processes of Vocal Creativity.....	128
Vocal Freedom.....	129
An Alternative Way to Manage, Express, Process, and Transform	
Emotional Experiences.....	130
Embodiment.....	132
Challenge and Risk.....	134
Need for Safety.....	135
Connection to Self and Others.....	135
6.2.1: Underlying Mechanisms of Vocal Creativity .....,	136
Improvisation.....	137
Intention.....	138
Interaction.....	138
Musical Holding.....	140
6.2.2: The Duet: Processes of Vocal Creativity and PE Theory .....	142
Chapter 7: A Response to the Call.....	145

7.2: The Human Voice’s Potential for Healing.....	145
7.3: Practical Implications for Counselling and Psychotherapy .....	147
7.4: Limitations of Study and Encore.....	149
7.5: Finale.....	150
References.....	152
List of Appendices.....	171
Appendix A: Information Sheet for Facilitators and Participants of ‘Rooted in Our Voice’ Workshop.....	172
Appendix B: Information Sheet for the Naked Voice Adventure Workshop.....	174
Appendix C: Interviewee Information Sheet, Consent Form, & Questions Guide...	176

## **List of Tables & Figures**

### **Tables**

Table 1: Supplemental Files.....	xiii
Table 2: Key Concepts and Terms.....	xv
Table 3: Edwards (2016) Models in MT.....	13
Table 4: Edwards (2016) Approaches in MT.....	14
Table 5: Programme.....	74
Table 6: Intersecting themes at point 4.....	125
Table 7: Intersecting themes at point 5.....	126
Table 8: Intersecting themes at point 6.....	126
Table 9: Intersecting themes at point 7.....	127

### **Figures**

Figure 1: Heuristic Comparison Flowchart.....	52
Figure 2: My Heuristic Journey.....	60
Figure 3: Venn Diagram.....	124

## Supplemental Files

File Name	Page	Link to Media
Lyrical Poem: Vocal Connection in Circular Formation	p. 86	<a href="https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/Therapeutic+Voiceworkers/1_4cv08fbm">https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/Therapeutic+Voiceworkers/1_4cv08fbm</a>
Lyrical Poem: Out of the Cage	p. 97	<a href="https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/Creative+Singers/1_1geh3jxp">https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/Creative+Singers/1_1geh3jxp</a>
Lyrical Poem: Phoenix Rise	p. 109	<a href="https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/Performance+Singers/1_pkzzn8r4">https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/Performance+Singers/1_pkzzn8r4</a>
Song: DJ	p. 120	<a href="https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/DJ%27s+Song/1_h77fe8zn">https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/DJ%27s+Song/1_h77fe8zn</a>
Creative Synthesis: The Voice	p. 122	<a href="https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/Creative+Synthesis+/1_w2ht9qsv">https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/Creative+Synthesis+/1_w2ht9qsv</a>

*Table 1:* Lists audio files, their page numbers and the length of the files that accompany the songs and lyrical poems in Chapter 5. To access the songs, follow the links in the right side of the table to the University of Edinburgh's Media Hopper Create channel. The links are also found in Chapter 5, and the areas where they are found are marked with an asterisk.

## Key Concepts & Terms

<b>Vocal Creativity</b>	A term encompassing the vocal practices of the present study, including creative singing, performance singing, and therapeutic voicework.
<b>Creative Singing</b>	Involves improvisational singing and the practice of singing and songwriting.
<b>Performance Singing</b>	Refers to the active presentation of song and sound, in interaction with an audience.
<b>Therapeutic Voicework</b>	Singing, overtone chanting, improvisation and movement to expand the expressive range of the voice, and to explore the self.
<b>Healing &amp; Transformation</b>	Definitions are listed in Chapter 4, Table 5: Programme, p.74.
<b>Therapeutic</b>	In this study, <i>therapeutic</i> refers to both intentional and unintentional psychological change, as influenced by the experiences of therapeutic voicework, creative singing, and performance singing.
<b>Voice</b>	a) ‘Voice’ describes my different roles in this study: personal voice and researcher voice b) It refers to the subpersonalities, or parts of self, of a person as represented by internal, multiple ‘voices’; c) It refers to the physical voice as a tool for healing; d) Indicates a person in the study.
<b>Primary Researcher</b>	Refers to the researcher who is conducting the study, i.e. Sarah Quinley.
<b>Co-researcher</b>	Refers to the participants of the present study.
<b>Heuristic Inquiry</b>	Heuristic inquiry is a qualitative method developed by Clark Moustakas (1990). The heuristic method is a form of phenomenological inquiry that brings to the fore the personal experience and insights of the primary researcher and co-researchers who experienced the phenomenon first-hand.
<b>Heuristic Comparison</b>	An adaptation of Moustakas’ heuristic method developed by Dave Hiles (2001). Involves a phenomenological engagement with the practices under comparison, drawing out similarities and differences, allowing a range of insights, meanings and themes to emerge; and a reflection on the inter-relations of the practices.
<b>Art Therapies</b>	An umbrella term used to refer to the medicinal use of creative arts, including dance movement psychotherapy, dramatherapy, music therapy, and intermodal arts therapies.
<b>Music Therapy (MT)</b>	‘Music therapy is a systematic process of intervention wherein the therapist helps the client to promote health, using music experiences and the relationships that develop through them as dynamic forces of change’ (Bruscia, 1998, p. 20).
<b>Dramatherapy (DT)</b>	‘DT has as its main focus the intentional use of healing aspects of drama and theatre as the therapeutic process. It is a method of working and playing that uses action methods to facilitate creativity,

	imagination, learning, insight, and growth' (BADth 2004, p. 1, cited in Karkou & Sanderson, 2006).
<b>Dance Movement Psychotherapy (DMT)</b>	Uses physical movement as a medium to express and analyse psychological material within some approaches and analytic frameworks (Payne, 2006).
<b>Intermodal Art Therapy</b>	The intermodal art therapies take integrative approach, incorporating sound, movement, art, and drama. The intermodal art therapies referenced in this study include the work of Paul Newham and his model for therapeutic voicework, Laury Rappaport and her Focused Oriented Art Therapy method, and Natalie Rogers' Person-Centred Expressive Arts Therapy approach.

*Table 2: Key Concepts and Terms*



## **Chapter 1: A Call for Response**

The voice is the primary medium for communication and self-expression in human beings. Since the voice is the main instrument used to communicate and express, it is important to understand humans' relationship to the voice. Humans use the voice to express thoughts and feelings, to preserve identity, and assert rights within the social order. The voice is an expression of a psychological state and a physiological operation. Ever-changing emotions infiltrate the voice and the physical condition of the body is reflected in the vocal expression. Mental health issues such as stress, anxiety and depression tend to reduce the vitality of the body and voice and thereby affect the capacity for unencumbered vocalisation (Newham, 1998).

Diane Austin, the founder of vocal psychotherapy—a voice-based model in the field of music therapy—notes that working with the voice through singing and sounding are ancient strategies for healing. Austin (2008) posits that '[n]o matter what the therapist's primary instrument may be, the most healing connections seem to come from the voice' (p.19). I define 'healing' as a process of bringing together aspects of one's self—body-mind-spirit—at deeper levels of inner knowing, leading to balance, with each aspect having equal importance and value. Existing literature in the singing for health and wellbeing field support the therapeutic benefits of vocal practices. Studies have demonstrated physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual benefits of vocal practices, such as choir and group singing, singing lessons and vocal improvisation.

In the field of music therapy (MT), vocal practices, for example voicework, are among the primary tools for facilitating psychological change. Voicework involves expanding the expressive range of the voice, and, through this, to explore the self (Moore Meigs, 1994). Voicework has been shown to help people with mental health issues, emotional problems, and

trauma (Austin, 2008; Baker & Uhlig, 2011; Newham, 1998). According to Austin (2016) ‘vocal psychotherapy is based on the idea that when we sing, internally resonating vibrations break-up and release blockages of energy, releasing feelings and allowing a natural flow of vitality and a state of equilibrium to return to the body’ (p. 2).

The voice’s healing potential seems to be gaining wider recognition within arts therapies, including dance and movement therapy (DMT), dramatherapy (DT), and intermodal art therapies (see Table 2, p. xv). These modalities have integrated sounding and song into psychotherapeutic methods for facilitating therapeutic change. Even in standard counselling and psychotherapy—in which verbal strategies take prominence—the sounds of the voice are recognised as holding important information about the individual’s emotions and personality (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2004). Most psychotherapists are aware of the information they receive through the music of the voice, namely tone, pitch, inflection, and tempo (Knoblauch, 2000; Moses, 1954; Reich, 1948, cited in Austin, 2008); however, practitioners within standard counselling and psychotherapy lack the advantage that arts therapists have in their training of listening to the music of the words (Priestley, 1994), and expanding the expressive range of the voice to facilitate healing.

Despite research evidencing holistic benefits of vocal practices for health and wellbeing, not much is known about how individuals experience healing and transformation through the voice; neither is there clarity about what characterises each vocal practice. The lack of insight into the processes and mechanisms associated with healing through vocal practices limits our understanding of how sound heals, and renders vocal practices less accessible for practitioners, especially those without special skills or knowledge in music and voice. The present study was conducted to contribute to the body of knowledge currently available on vocal practices for

health and wellbeing, and to provide a comprehensive understanding of the voice as an instrument of healing for therapists in, and outwith arts therapies.

## **1.2: Introducing my Personal Voice**

For thought is a bird of space, that in a cage of words  
may indeed unfold its wings but cannot fly.

(Gibran & Bushrui, 2012, p. 61)

One of the many personal experiences that led to my interest in the healing potential of the voice occurred in personal therapy. Working with a talking therapist, it was months before she knew that I sing. In talking therapy, the music within me took a subordinate position in my self-expression as my words took the fore. I did not think that my singing voice had a place within the talking therapy room; until my therapist learned I was a singer. Her appreciation of my voice as an important part of my healing journey allowed me to open the cage of words that I hid in and enabled parts of myself that had been unheard to sing—both literally and figuratively.

With my therapist, I shared songs I had written, and other artists' songs that expressed what I was feeling in ways that speaking could not reach. With her, I explored issues I had around my voice and creativity, finding deeper meanings for my difficulties in life. We used my voice to tune-in to what was happening inside me, directly accessing my body through the breath and sound resonating within my being. Sharing my inner music with my therapist made me feel fully seen and heard and developed my self-awareness and self-understanding toward therapeutic change.

My experience with my voice in personal therapy gave me an acute awareness of the voice in my own counselling practice. I learned to listen to the music of the voice in addition to the content of what clients say. I was often confused when I worked with clients who

experienced a range of feelings but had little or no emotional inflection in their voices. I understood my cultural bias here. As an American in Britain, I knew that the way I speak, and express emotion may be different because of culture. However, the complexity of my experience with my own voice still had me wondering whether there could be more underlying the voice quality of my clients.

When I explored the meanings behind my clients' use of their voice, some expressed their difficulty in connecting with their feelings and expressing them vocally. Others commented that their small vocal range was symbolic of their need to self-protect, while some clients described deeper meanings their voice quality had for them. I continued to wonder what the voice can reveal about the personality, and how an expanded vocal range might facilitate greater self-expression for therapeutic change.

My personal and professional experiences with the voice inspired my will to discover how I could access the healing potential of the voice to enhance counselling and psychotherapy practice and bring together two of my greatest passions: psychotherapy and voice. Of course, vocal psychotherapy is already in existence, but without any formal training in music or voice, it would be years until I had the skills required to pursue a career in that discipline. Moreover, given my own experiences, I knew that I did not need any special skills to benefit from the healing power of the voice, and I wanted to discover more practices and understandings that were accessible to me and others who do not have formal training in music.

My research journey began as an autoethnography through which I explored my experience of healing through singing. I referenced songs I had written throughout my life, wrote new songs, and reflected on how I had used my voice to heal. I investigated literature about creativity, singing, and other relevant research, and my understanding of the voice expanded. I

began to discover the variety of ways vocal sound has been used and understood therapeutically. However, I was still at a loss as to how I could integrate the voice into my practice, as a talking therapist working in the dialogue of person-centred and psychodynamic traditions. The literature I reviewed lacked insight from case studies showing the processes involved in integrating vocal practices outside the arts therapy disciplines.

To fill this gap in current scholarship and enrich my limited experience with my voice, the way forward seemed to lie in exploring the experiences of individuals who have healed and transformed through vocal practices. The heart of this study is in Chapter 5 where I engage in a collective ‘composition’ with the participants of this study. I refer to this study’s participants as my ‘co-researchers’ to reflect a collaboration of different perspectives to understand the same phenomenon. In our collective composition, my autobiographical contributions frame my co-researchers’ accounts, thereby connecting our experiences and contributing new, accessible insights on how individuals experience healing through the voice.

### **1.3: A Collective Composition**

Through exploring individuals’ lived experiences of healing through the voice, I endeavour to uncover underlying qualities, mechanisms, and processes that influenced individuals’ healing experiences of using vocal practices. To accomplish these aims, I embark on a heuristic journey into my experience and the experiences of ten people who believe they have healed and transformed through vocal practices, including creative singing, performance singing, and therapeutic voicework. I define ‘creative singing’ as involving improvisational singing and the practices of singing and songwriting; ‘performance singing’ as the active presentation of song and sound, in interaction with an audience; and drawing from Moore Meigs’ (1994) definition of voicework, ‘therapeutic voicework’ is the use of singing, overtone chanting,

improvisation and movement to expand the expressive range of the voice, and to explore the self. I have grouped these vocal practices under the term ‘vocal creativity’.

I use a qualitative case-based approach to explore the experiences of vocal creativity since this research strategy can shed maximum light on the human experience, as lived, in a real-life context (Edwards, 1998; Schneider, 1999). The heuristic method is a form of phenomenological inquiry developed by Clark Moustakas (1990) that brings to the fore the personal experience and insights of the primary researcher and co-researchers who experienced the phenomenon first-hand. Studying three vocal practices, I adapted Moustakas’ method and conducted what Hiles (2001) termed a ‘heuristic comparison’. A heuristic comparison involves a phenomenological engagement with the practices under comparison, drawing out similarities and differences, allowing a range of insights, meanings, and themes to emerge; and illuminating the inter-relations of the practices.

Heuristic inquiry encourages the primary researcher to engage in different ways of generating knowledge. According to Moustakas (1990) ‘at the base of all heuristic discoveries is the power of revelation in tacit knowing’ (p. 20). Moustakas (1990) defines tacit knowledge as ‘the deep structure that contains the unique perceptions, feelings, intuitions, beliefs, and judgements housed in the internal frame of reference of a person that governs behaviour and determines how we interpret experience’ (p.32). The tacit dimension may be further described as that internal place where experience, feeling, and meaning come together to form a picture of the world. Tacit knowledge is continuously evolving, and a multi-levelled organisation existing somewhat outside of ordinary awareness. Tacit knowledge is the base upon which all other knowledge stands, changing with new experiences, as the individual compares the outer world to her inner world and determines what it is that is being experienced. In heuristic inquiry, the

primary researcher must remain internally focused and dwell within the feelings of the tacit dimension, surrendering to her subjective experience.

As the primary researcher in this study, my subjective experience is presented along with my co-researchers' experiences in written and artistic forms to reflect different ways of knowing and achieve a richer and fuller understanding of the phenomenon being explored. The artistic forms consist of lyrical poems and songs to offer alternative understandings of the key findings which, as stated by Ogden (2004) '[....] cannot be faithfully translated, transcribed, recorded, explained, understood or told in words' (cited in Bondi, Wyatt, & Tamas, 2013). These artistic forms are additional, creative renditions of the verbal presentation of the findings, as we engage the mind and body through words and music. The knowledge gathered from this study may give practitioners previously uncharted insight into the nature and meaning involved in the therapeutic use of the voice and provide innovative ways of understanding aspects of vocal creativity for psychotherapeutic practice.

#### **1.4: The 'Call' of the Research**

The 'call' of this research is to contribute insight into how creative forms of vocalising are associated with therapeutic outcomes and how each practice is distinct in what it can offer people to improve health and wellbeing. Like an improvisational jazz ensemble, my collaborations with my co-researchers are the creative, verbal melodies playing over the continuously repeating thread of the research question: *What is the nature and meaning of experiences of vocal creativity, and what can these experiences tell us about the human voice's potential for healing?* I explore this question by combining two ways of generating new understandings: Process-Experiential Theory and vocal creativity. To harmonise these disciplines, I create a chorus of voices which signify the different perspectives taken in this

research, including my researcher voice, my personal voice, and the voices of my co-researchers. As a researcher and a participant in this study, I wanted to make distinct ‘who’ is speaking. My personal voice was introduced in this chapter (1.2) and will return in Chapter 5. In Chapter 5, my voice and those of the co-researchers share our stories through our ‘verbal music’ (Goodchild, 2015), providing insight into the phenomenon under study. In ‘The Duet’, my personal voice intertwines with my researcher voice and is accompanied by a symphony of Process-Experiential Theory. I invite the reader to join our chorus in dynamic and alternative ways of knowing and understanding our subjective journeys into the body and self through our experiences of vocal creativity practices.

### **1.5: Setting the Stage**

This introductory chapter is followed by an exploration of my research question in a review of relevant literature (Chapter 2). In ‘A Search for Silence’, I begin with an interdisciplinary exploration of fields that have integrated the voice into therapy practice. With an understanding of the healing potential of the voice, I lead the reader into gaps in our knowledge that I wish to address with the present study.

In Chapter 3, I explain my philosophical tunings, consisting of my ontology and epistemology, which form the basis for my methodology. In Chapter 4, I discuss my choice for a heuristic phenomenological methodology. I outline how I adapted the heuristic method to address my research aims and include the methods used to generate data on my research question. I finish the chapter with ethical considerations and discuss how I intended to establish the trustworthiness of the study.

Chapter 5 presents our ‘Collective Composition’. This chapter is comprised of co-researchers’ individual vocal stories and my autobiographical contributions. To develop further



insight and expand the theoretical base for vocal practices, I intersect Process-Experiential Theory with my experience of vocal creativity in the ‘Outro’. Composite depictions are formed of each vocal practice to present the key findings of each group in the ‘choruses’. Through a creative synthesis which takes the form of a song, I present the core themes of the phenomenon.

In Chapter 6, I engage in a heuristic comparison and discuss the study’s findings from the presentation and analysis in Chapter 5. In the final chapter, I respond to the call of the research by discussing the new insights generated from my analysis. Thereafter, I elucidate the limitations of the study and identify areas for further research in the ‘Encore’. Finally, I complete the heuristic journey through voice and sound by presenting the culmination of my insight in the ‘Finale’.

## **Chapter 2: A Search for Silence**

In this chapter, I invite you, the reader, to join me on my interdisciplinary exploration of literature surrounding the voice as a healing tool. This literature review has two parts. The first part investigates clinical contexts, beginning with the field of music therapy, as it forms a basis for the development of vocal psychotherapy. To give further context to the development of vocal psychotherapy, I provide a discussion of voicework pioneers. After, I explore voicework in other arts therapies for insight on how vocal practices have been integrated outside a music therapy context. In the second part of the literature review, I cease clinical engagement of vocal practices, opening to more understandings and vocal methods within the field of singing for health and wellbeing. Finally, I identify gaps in our knowledge that I endeavour to address with my research.

### **Part 1: Exploring Clinical Contexts**

#### **2.2: The Clinical Field of Music Therapy**

Since the writings of Aristotle and Plato, music has been considered a healing influence (American Music Therapy Association (AMTA), 2018). However, in the United States, music therapy as a profession formally began after WWI and WWII, when amateur and professional musicians visited hospitals and sang for veterans suffering from the trauma of war. The observable health improvements that the veterans experienced led doctors and nurses to request that musicians work at the hospitals as part of clinical treatment for veterans. It was later apparent that musicians needed some clinical training before entering hospitals for this purpose. Hence, the demand for a college curriculum grew (AMTA, 2018). The three founders of music therapy education were Margaret Anderton, Isa Maud Lisen, and Harriet Ayer Seymour.

Collectively, their work contributed to the development of formalised coursework in music therapy at the university level.

In 1950, a professional body known as the National Association for Music Therapy (NAMT) was formed in the US by a team of music therapists (AMTA, 2018). American music therapy (MT) developments initially influenced MT practice in the UK. One of the pioneers of MT in the UK was Juliette Alvin (1975). Alvin founded the Society for Music Therapy and Remedial Music, which later developed into the British Society for Music Therapy (Karkou & Sanderson, 2006). Alvin's influence was such that therapists today are expected to demonstrate high levels of musicianship and strong improvisation skills (Karkou & Sanderson, 2006). Another vital contribution to the development of the MT field has been the pioneering work of Nordoff & Robbins (1971). Both Alvin and Nordoff & Robbins developed their work within the therapeutic care of children with learning difficulties. Following their examples, many music therapists today work with children with learning difficulties and autism.

Until the work of Priestley (1975) and others in the 1960s and 1970s, MT pioneers did not subscribe to specific psychotherapeutic schools of thought (Karkou and Sanderson, 2006). According to Storr (1993), the development of MT was delayed due to the work of Freud and Jung, who had limited knowledge of the therapeutic potential of music. This led to a split in the field; the US focused on behavioural therapy, while the UK embraced a wider range of psychotherapeutic schools of thought, including humanistic and psychoanalytic.

In 1976, the Association of Professional Music Therapists (APMT) was formed, which became the official professional body for MT. A noteworthy development of the field was highlighted in the UK in 1997 when it was recognised as a profession supplementary to medicine by state registration of music therapy (Bunt and Hoskyns, 2002). This significant step forward

led to increased development in the principles and frameworks for the practice of music therapy for working with diverse populations. Below, I discuss some of these principles and frameworks.

First, I conceptualise music therapy. Bruscia (1998) offers a useful definition for this purpose:

Music therapy is a systematic process of intervention wherein the therapist helps the client to promote health, using music experiences and the relationships that develop through them as dynamic forces of change. (p. 20).

Bruscia's definition emphasises a few of the basic principles of music therapy, including the use of musical instruments and the therapeutic relationship as facilitative of healing. To contribute further understanding of what music therapy entails, I turn to APMT:

There are different approaches to the use of music in therapy . . . Fundamental to all approaches, however, is the development of a relationship between the client and therapist. Music-making forms the basis for communication in this relationship . . . (BSMT 2004b, p.1, cited in Karkou and Sanderson, 2006).

This definition touches another of the basic principles of music therapy: the different models and approaches that MT therapists adopt. The diverse ways in which practitioners practice music therapy is essential for understanding the field. There are several important models and approaches, and many models have been adapted and expanded. *The Oxford Handbook of Music Therapy* (Edwards, 2016) chose 11 models and approaches to focus on. These were selected due to their established literature base, and one or more training programmes exist that are based on the model.

The distinction between models and approaches is useful for the information presented in Tables 3 & 4 below. Some music therapists follow a model of practice where music therapy methods and techniques are implemented, such as in Nordoff-Robbins' Music Therapy. Other

music therapists might follow an approach in which methods and techniques specific to music therapy are overlaid across a model or theoretical framework from that area, such as in the case of Developmental Music Therapy. In Tables 3 & 4 below, I give an overview of the key tenets of each to lead the reader to a relatively recent development in the field: vocal psychotherapy. This voice-based model will be discussed in section 2.3.

#### **Edwards (2016): Selected Models**

<b>Models</b>	<b>Description</b>
Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music-based creative therapy</li> <li>• Provided music lessons for children in special education</li> <li>• Included some song improvisation</li> <li>• Established in London in the 1980s, it is one of the main music training programs in the world</li> </ul>
The ‘Field of Play’	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Founded in the late 1980s by Carolyn Kenny, who is a music therapy practitioner and researcher</li> <li>• Comprised of music and voice interventions</li> <li>• Takes an ecological view of healing</li> <li>• Challenged dominant views of the music therapy discipline</li> </ul>
Community Music Therapy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formed by Christoph Schwabe</li> <li>• Voice and music-based approach</li> <li>• Emphasises communal rather than individualised human experience in society</li> </ul>
Resource-oriented Music Therapy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Created by Rolvsjord</li> <li>• Focuses on the importance of positive emotions and experiences as part of therapeutic processes</li> <li>• Draws from perspectives from musicking (Small 1998), and sociology of music (DeNora 2000)</li> </ul>
Culture-centred Music Therapy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music based approach developed by Brynjulf Stige</li> <li>• Stige provides new conceptualisations of culture and describes it not as external, but as a resource for the dynamic interplay between self and society</li> <li>• Approach looks at the individual in context as the person interacts in an ever-changing environment in which it affects and is affected by in on-going cultural learning</li> </ul>
Aesthetic Music Therapy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music-centred model developed by Colin Andrew Lee</li> <li>• Acknowledges the client’s sounds, musical preferences, improvised song, as the therapist embeds meanings in</li> </ul>

	<p>sounds initiated by the client (McGrath, 2012, cited in Edwards &amp; Lee, 2016)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relatively young developing theory</li> </ul>
Vocal Psychotherapy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First voice-based approach created by Diane Austin (described in voicework section)</li> </ul>

Table 3: Edwards (2016) Models in MT

### Edwards (2016) Selected Approaches

Approaches	Description
Feminist Perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No single founder but there are pioneers: Heineman (1982), Curtis (2000), and Baines (1992)</li> <li>• Adopts feminist perspectives for practice</li> </ul>
Psychodynamic Music Therapy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music based approach developed in the 1960s (Edwards &amp; Metzner, 2016).</li> <li>• Has the underlying assumption of dynamic conscious and unconscious processes which influence the intrapsychic and interpersonal processes within the therapeutic relationship</li> <li>• Focuses on the transferential and countertransferential exchanges in the client-therapist relationship</li> </ul>
Developmental Music Therapy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Underlies most (if not all) music therapy models</li> <li>• Developmental theory uses voice and music, improvisation and composition with consideration of the person or groups' ecological environment and developmental stages</li> </ul>
Anthroposophical Music Therapy (AnMt)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contemporary music therapy model based in anthroposophy; a doctrine developed by Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925)</li> <li>• Underpinned by philosophical traditions including Theosophy and Rosicrucianism (Bamford 2002, cited in Edwards and Intveen, 2016)</li> <li>• AnMt has received criticism for building on cosmological connections that can easily be shown to have no scientific basis (Summer, 1996, cited in Edwards &amp; Intveen, 2016)</li> </ul>

Table 4: Edwards (2016) Approaches in MT

This section presents an overview of the field of music therapy, touching on its development and bringing into focus some major music-centred therapy approaches and models that incorporate the voice as an aspect of treatment. Most models have been music-centred, including Nordoff-Robbins, Aesthetic Music Therapy and Anthroposophical Music Therapy, with only a few that consider the voice as a central aspect of the approach, such as Community Music Therapy and Psychodynamic Music Therapy.

Overall, my view of the music therapy field is that music therapists have become more autonomous, challenging dominant views and approaches as they work toward an integration of different models. There is growing interest in the significance of the voice and its connection to the self (Baker & Uhlig, 2011). Voicework in music therapy has taken a more prominent position in the practice of MT. To uncover what is known about the voice as a therapeutic tool in clinical settings, I now discuss the development of vocal psychotherapy in the field of music therapy.

### **2.3: Voicework in Psychotherapy**

Before I introduce Austin's vocal psychotherapy model, I go through a historical account of some theorists and practitioners who influenced the development of voicework in psychotherapy. To give context to this section, I provide the reader with a sense of what constitutes voicework. Melinda Moore Meigs (1992) may have been the first to identify voicework as a healing tool in the UK. Moore Meigs (1994) defines voicework as a process of 'using your voice to find and develop aspects of yourself which may be new to you and to understand what these aspects mean to you' (p.175). The term voicework is used 'to cover singing, overtone chanting, improvisation, breathing techniques, bodywork, visualisation, and ear training when they are used to expand the expressive range of your voice, and through this, to

explore your Self' (p.176). This, Moore Meigs says, 'involves a search for emotional understanding and integration' (p. 176).

Such exploration of the self is what, according to therapeutic voicework practitioner Paul Newham (1998), turns voicework into 'therapeutic voicework'. Therapeutic voicework is not to be confused with voice therapy, which is a branch of speech and language therapy. Instead, therapeutic voicework is concerned with the expressive activity of the voice which has been detrimentally influenced by emotional problems, trauma, mental illness, and psychological ailments. The authors I have chosen were selected based on their contributions to the development of therapeutic voicework in clinical settings.

### **Pioneers of Voicework**

Psychotherapy was built on the notion that we can express the self through the voice. Inspired by the Greek concept of catharsis, Sigmund Freud (1953) developed what he called 'The Talking Cure'. Freud found that his patients were able to connect with early trauma if they were able to express the emotion with the same intensity of the original experience; for example, through screaming, crying, howling, or moaning. Through voicing emotions vocally, the somatic symptoms caused by the experience would disappear. Freud also coined the term 'free association', which is the process of encouraging patients to freely express whatever words come to them, without censoring the contents of patients' expressions.

A pupil of Sigmund Freud, Wilhelm Reich, revisited the significance of catharsis and began exploring the relationship between so-called psychic energy and its conversion into physical ailment and psychological state (Newham, 1998). Reich (1948) proposed that psychological state and attitude manifest in the body as a kind of defensive 'muscular armour' (p. 253). He described these manifestations as 'chronically fixed muscular attitudes' (p. 353). For



Reich, psychological armour and muscular armour are ‘functionally identical’ (p. 353).

Therefore, Reich believed that successful therapy would need to be psycho-physical and disagreed with Freud’s verbal approach for therapy.

A specific way in which Reich worked with the body was through breathwork. He encouraged people not to talk but to release their feelings through breathing. This breathwork gave way to screams, sighs, tears, and sobs, helping clients to feel cleansed of their previous condition (Reich, 1948, cited in Newham, 1998). This led to a breakthrough in psychotherapy which saw the introduction of bodywork in addition to the purely verbal approach. Reich’s approach relates to what is now called voicework, and we may recognise his work as a contribution to the significance of the voice for psychotherapeutic practice (Newham, 1998).

Alexander Lowen, a pupil of Reich, took Reich's work with the voice a step further. Lowen believed that the vocal sounds of patients held important information about their character and psychological issues. He was the first to introduce the idea to psychotherapy that the quality of the voice mirrors the underlying psychological state, and he believed that freeing the body would free the psyche, and that expanding the voice would have the same effect (Lowen, 1976). Lowen thought that because the voice is so closely tied to feeling, the process of ‘freeing it involves the mobilization of suppressed feeling and their expression in sound’ (Lowen, 1976, cited in Newham 1998, p. 200). While Lowen went on to develop bodywork and promoted the use of screaming as a powerful cathartic act, he did not attempt to shape vocal sounds as he did with the body. Paul Moses, however, did.

Moses was a laryngologist and was therefore involved in treating voice problems. He took an inter-disciplinary approach to treat voice disorders in which psychodynamics played a central role (Newham, 1998). In his work as a laryngologist, he realised that emotional

disturbance causes misuse of the vocal instrument, which leads to voice symptoms (Moses, 1954). He thought it was important that laryngologists receive a certain amount of psychological training to assist patients better. Influenced by the theories developed by Freud and Jung, he believed that the psyche could be heard through the voice acoustically, comparing such possibility to the way dreams provide visual expression. While Freud focused on the universal trauma that children experience from being weaned off the breast, Moses stressed the significance of the baby's preverbal vocalisations as necessary for development and psychological health. Hence, Moses believed that successful vocal therapy depended on giving patients the opportunity to give voice to that which was wordless. He believed that singing was the only adult activity which answered to these needs (Moses, 1954). Despite this discovery, Moses was unable to practically investigate the use of singing with patients before the end of his life. Nevertheless, his work was important to the development of therapeutic voicework.

Alfred Wolfsohn, with his 'Extended Vocal Technique', influenced Moses and challenged the vocal pedagogy of the time. Wolfsohn advocated for Jungian thought and an overall psychological view of the voice. Wolfsohn was among other voicework pioneers and scholars who first described the voice as a primary instrument for expression and communication (Uhlig 2006). Wolfsohn was a WWI veteran who suffered from Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSD). The trauma he experienced manifested itself in the form of aural hallucinations, replaying continuously the terrified human sounds he heard on the battlefield. To rid himself of these violent and haunting voices, he emulated his inner vocal sounds, bringing about what he described as a combination of catharsis and exorcism. Resulting from his self-exploration and the voices of others he later worked with, he came to understand the voice as an expression of the

self, and that voice could express so much more than the limitations in our own conception of ourselves.

Wolfsohn's approach offered techniques and exercises that integrated singing and psychotherapy, seeking to combine the principles of both. He believed that singing was not something that was merely part of life, but the very expression of life itself. Wolfsohn desired to develop a method whereby the human voice could mend the fractures of the past (Newham, 1997). Carl Jung (1958) referred to these fractures of the past, as the 'shadow' and Wolfsohn believed that a person might be able to express the shadow through spontaneous vocalisations, such as wails, undulating tones, and utterances. Furthermore, Wolfsohn subscribed to Jung's view that each human psyche comprises a composite of subpersonalities that appear in dreams. Wolfsohn sought to enable the expression of these subpersonalities through distinct vocal sounds (Newham, 1997). His work with vocalisations became what has now become termed as voicework.

The individuals mentioned above form a base for what music therapist turned vocal psychotherapist Dr. Diane Austin would eventually create: a voice-based model in the field of music therapy. Vocal psychotherapy uses the voice as the primary instrument for psychological healing. Austin's extensive research led her to the conclusion that the voice is the most effective way for clients to forge a deeper relationship with themselves and others. Vocal psychotherapy involves working with breath, natural sounds, vocal improvisation, songs, and dialogue to facilitate change and growth (Austin, 2008).

The year 2006 marked Austin's establishment of her model in which she focused on voice-based therapeutic techniques, methods, and models in music therapy. Austin (2007, 2008) went on to develop the theory and practice of vocal psychotherapy, distinguishing her model.

Like Wolfsohn, Austin's practice was highly influenced by Jung. Austin had undergone personal therapy from a Jungian analyst, and their discussion of dreams and archetypes inspired her work. However, as she developed her model, she drew from psychodynamic concepts, such as free association, object relations, transference, counter-transference, resistance, and Winnicottian concepts like the 'good enough' mother (Winnicott, 1953) and intersubjectivity (Winnicott, 1971). Austin also linked her model with depth psychology, trauma theory, and the Jungian tradition, contributing to the field of music therapy an integration between the voice and these theoretical frameworks.

Austin continues to provide new theoretical perspectives for the practice of vocal psychotherapy. She collaborated with Elisa Monti (Austin & Monti, 2018) on an article addressing the notable yet unexplored similarities between dialogical self-theory (DST) in psychotherapy and the therapeutic approaches of vocal psychotherapy. Austin uses her techniques of 'vocal holding' and 'free-associative singing' to give unique perspectives on the differences and similarities between these two domains. Austin and Monti (2018) emphasise the importance of musicality in voicing what DST calls 'I-positions' and compares this concept to Austin's notion of 'parts of self'. The notion of different self-parts echoes Wolfsohn and Jung's perspectives on subpersonalities and claims by Wolfsohn and Newham that people may express different parts of self through the voice.

While Austin took a psychological perspective for her practice, Lisa Sokolov took a more somatic perspective. Sokolov (2012) developed a vocal approach called 'Embodied Voicework'. Sokolov (2012) defines her method as the 'practice of free, expressive, non-verbal, improvisational singing, aimed at the development of fuller human potential through the practices of attentiveness, an attitude of radical receptivity and listening' (p. 108). Her work

originated with vocal breathwork for pain management for psychiatric populations. It later evolved into a primary method in music therapy. She emphasised the practice of ‘deep phenomenological listening’ (p.111), which she believes informs us about our inner self and our body through the music within our body.

For Sokolov, ‘body’ can mean the physical, energetic, emotional, imaginal, mental, and knowing (wisdom) body. Through vocal improvisation, she explains, the ‘invisible is made visible [...] revealing the energetic body [...] that transports us into other realms and other states of consciousness. Singing is the language of the soul’ (p. 110). Sokolov (1987) noted that ‘the healing and learning of therapy take place within the vocal improvisation itself’ (p. 356). Sokolov’s experiences convinced her that people are drawn to find that place of re-connection with themselves, through the transformative influence of breath, touch, relationship, and vocal improvisation.

Felicity Baker and Sylka Uhlig (2011) authored ‘Voicework in Music Therapy’ to address the absence of a volume comprised of research-based techniques for voicework. Many of the techniques they included are used with children with autism spectrum disorders, at-risk children, newborn infants, and people with dementia, speech apraxia, spinal cord injuries, Parkinson’s disease, as well as those who are terminally ill. Their work has greatly influenced understanding of the connection between voice, breath and body, the client / therapist relationship, and emotional and physical experience of voicework. One of the clinical areas that were not covered is adult mental health. The culmination of their research and their historical explication of the development of the field has filled a gap in research, offering music therapy practitioners, from an array of approaches, practical and theoretical guidance for implementing vocal practices into their work.

Despite the strides taken in the field of music therapy to give voicework a more prominent place within practice and research, studies exploring the therapeutic benefits of voicework for the field of standard counselling and psychotherapy are lacking. However, attention to voice sounds has been recognised as important for understanding processes in psychotherapy (Bady and Lachmann 1985; Sullivan, 1954, cited in Hermans & Dimaggio, 2004). In 'Hearing Voices', a chapter found in *The Dialogical Self in Psychotherapy*, Hermans & Dimaggio (2004) discuss how therapists may work with different parts of the personality through the voice. The authors reference Scherer and colleagues (1984) who interestingly found that 'vocal cues were much more important than verbal impressions about the personality' (p. 238). The authors conducted a study to expand on Scherer and colleagues' research and other similar research (Fonagy, 1976; Scherer and Bergmann, 1990; Williams and Stevens, 1972) by exploring whether 'one might observe differences not only in content and phrasing but also in the way the voice sounds' (p. 238). They concluded that it is possible to distinguish internal voices based on the sound of the client's speech. Interestingly, speech sounds have also been found to influence emotions, and vice versa (Fonagy, 1976; Williams and Stevens, 1972). These studies have paved the way for more direct study, and use, of the voice in standard psychotherapy practice.

I have presented some pioneers of therapeutic voicework. The literature points to the relationship between the voice, the body, and the self. Freud (1953), Lowen (1976), and Reich (1948) linked the body and the voice through the latter's potential to release trauma stored in the body through cathartic vocalisations. Moses (1954) and Sokolov (2012) also refer to the connection between the voice and the body, highlighting singing as a way to facilitate physical and psychological health. Austin (2008) and Wolfsohn (Newham, 1997) took psychological

perspectives for their work with the voice. Austin & Monti (2018) and Wolfsohn (Newham, 1997) acknowledged subpersonalities in people and how voicework may assist in each part's expression. Uhlig and Baker (2011) have brought together therapeutic voice-based interventions for the benefit of practitioners; however, there is still a lack of literature surrounding voicework for adults with mental health issues. Finally, I mentioned what remains of voicework in standard practice, referencing studies that explore internal multiplicity through the voice and the voice's connection to emotion. The labour of voicework practitioners is now gaining significance as the use of voicework is acquiring more acclaim in the field of music therapy. Arts therapies have also begun to integrate voicework. I now turn to this work.

#### **2.4: Voicework in Other Arts Therapies**

This section explores other arts therapies that have used voice and sound as part of their therapy practices. According to Karkou & Sanderson (2006), the arts therapies field consists of four disciplines: art therapy (AT), music therapy (MT), dramatherapy (DT) and dance movement therapy (DMT). For the scope of this literature review, I am unable to address all the disciplines. I exclude art therapy and replace it with another discipline called intermodal arts therapy, which integrates the four disciplines. These disciplines contribute to the theoretical base for the present study and illustrate more ways that the voice has been engaged with therapeutically, outside of a music therapy context.

#### **Dance and Movement Therapy**

Dance movement therapy (DMT) uses physical movement as a medium to express and analyse psychological material within some approaches and analytic frameworks (Payne, 2006). DMT is based on the principle that how we move reflects and influences our emotional processes and thinking patterns; that the body and mind are interrelated. In *The Oxford Handbook of Dance*

*and Wellbeing*, the authors discuss an increasing number of research publications that support the idea of dance and wellbeing as a mind-body psychosomatic dynamic and relational process (Karkou, Oliver and Lycouris, 2017). Some dance movement therapists have incorporated sound and singing, but these vocal approaches seem to use the voice more as an adjunctive tool. However, Chaiklin *et al.*, (1993) consider vocalisation and verbalisation integral to the practice of DMT. According to Meekums (2002), verbalisation is more common in certain parts of a DMT session, especially during verbal processing of the movement experience. Nevertheless, several figures in the field consider verbalisations and vocalisations important in the therapeutic process (Stark & Lohn, 1989). I want to highlight a few notable authors who have recognised the connection and significance between the voice and dance/movement.

An important figure in the dance movement therapy field is Rudolf von Laban who ‘recognised that it was through movement that feelings, moods, and ideas were conveyed, and that voice was part of the whole, simply another manifestation of movement’ (Hogson & Preston-Dunlop, 1990, cited in Newham, 1998, p. 401). Laban stated that ‘the voice is itself produced by the physical actions of a number of parts of the body’ (Lamb, 1965, cited in Newham, 1998, p. 402). Laban's work is the culmination of his will to understand the connection between the inner psychic processes and their expression in physical movement and motion in the voice. Laban was fascinated by Jung’s extroverted and introverted personality delineations and compared these to physical energetic ‘inward flow’ and ‘outward flow’ categories of motion (Laban, 1960). Despite the development of his theoretical and analytical paradigm, Laban has not bequeathed any applicable or practicable vocal methodology, but he was nevertheless a pioneer in the field of dance and movement therapy, inspiring the work of dance therapy pioneers, such as Irmgard Bartenieff, Judith Kestenberg, and Warren Lamb.



A few more notable figures who emphasise the voice in dance and movement are Marian Chace and Mary Starks Whitehouse. Marian Chace invited vocalisation with words and sounds to support people's movements, while in her own ongoing narrative verbalisation served to guide deeper insights and interactions, and to structure the group process (Levy, 2005; Stark & Lohn, 1989). Chace's emphasis on symbolism was to facilitate the expression, development, and elaboration of the feelings or needs expressed through movement. In Whitehouse's Authentic Movement work, the mover is invited to become aware of her body's inner impulses and to express them through her body, and these inner experiences mostly manifest in movement or postures, but at times also in sound (Halstrup, 2015, p. 292). Sounding and moving are often considered inseparable, unfolding together in the process that is Authentic Movement. The voice in these approaches may be regarded as an extension of the body.

According to dance educationalist Barbara Mettler (1985), 'the feeling of a movement is sometimes more easily expressed if we let the sound of the voice be part of it' (p. 55). Mettler posits that natural expressions of life are equally both sounds and movement. Norma Canner, a student of Mettler, introduced vocal sound in her work with developmentally delayed children, encouraging children to emulate both the sound and movement components. Inspired by Canner's approach, Brownell and Lewis (1990) discovered that spontaneous sounding helped people gain a stronger sense of self and others and integrate split-off parts of self. The work of Lewis particularly influenced the development of Paul Newham's (1998) 'Voice Movement Journey', through which 'the client or group of clients moves and vocalises, allowing the body and voice to embody images, animals, characters, and feelings as they arise, discovering parts of self which have for a long time remained unvisited' (p. 409).

The approaches I have discussed have been used with a wide range of client populations (Borenstein, 2007; Sandel & Hollander, 1995; Steiner Çelebi, 2006; Steiner Çelebi, 2009) and most of the approaches provide case material to illustrate their clinical application. However, the use of vocalisation is often mentioned superficially, and the differences in modalities reduce the transferability of the findings between client populations. Vocalisation is frequently embedded in approaches that integrate several arts therapies. Thus, there is a need for more in-depth accounts of how and why vocalising may enhance dance and movement approaches and techniques.

### **Dramatherapy**

Dramatherapy is the intentional and systematic use of drama and theatre processes to achieve healthy psychological growth and change (Karkou and Sanderson, 2006). Self-expression and the development of creativity are stated aims in many definitions of dramatherapy (e.g. Johnson, 1981, p. 13). According to Bruun (2015), '[v]oice and sounding is an integrated element in dramatherapy, as in acting and life in general' (p. 3). Three approaches that integrate vocal somatic exploration are the legacies of Roy Hart and Alfred Wolfsohn, Movement with touch and sound (Sesame), and Fitzmaurice Voicework®.

#### *Roy Hart Theatre*

Roy Hart was a pupil of Alfred Wolfsohn, and he aimed to appropriate the extended vocal range of his pupils for artistic expression by devising an experiential theatre known as the Roy Hart Theatre. Wolfsohn/Hart's approach focused strongly on verbal and nonverbal expression (Hitt, 2005). Hart believed that as we remove the barriers between our beliefs and our full range of vocal expression, we simultaneously break down psychological barriers of the personality. Hart coined the phrase, 'Primitive Vocal Energy' to represent these vocal expressions (Hitt, 2005). Wolfsohn/Hart's improvisational sounding exercises were explored

with individuals and groups, as vocal responses to evocative images. Participants were asked to choose one voice that was then shared with the group. Everyone would then paint how they imagined the voice in shapes and colours onto a full-size body silhouette of themselves. This play with the visual and tactile media supported participants' creativity and ability to take risks.

The contribution of Wolfsohn/Hart's practices has given individuals an invitation to challenge the socially adapted vocal identity. Emerging from the unconscious and inter-subjective realms are new and unheard voices. This creative exploration of expanding vocal expression and softening rigid personality structures corresponds with dramatherapy (Bruun, 2015). However, the practices passed on from Wolfsohn/Hart lean towards artistic practice even today. Still, their practices involve a deep understanding of the intimate relationship between voice and personal identity (Pikes, 2004, p. 71, cited in Bruun, 2015, p. 8).

### *The Sesame Approach (MTS)*

The Sesame approach integrates voice and sounding as meaning-making processes liberated from verbal language communication (Bruun, 2015). According to Jones (1996), Sesame practitioners have pioneered the field of drama and movement in therapy in the UK and internationally since 1964. Porter (2014) states that the emphasis on sounding has varied over the years but is now an integrated element in the method. With reference to the mother/child relationship, humans' primary needs for touch and sound are the inspiration for the inclusion of sounding. Safe playfulness between the therapist and client through sounding resonates with Austin's (2008) 'vocal holding' technique. This technique involves the therapist singing in unison with the client before moving into spontaneous improvisation. This approach relates to another related dramatherapy method, Neuro-Dramatic-Play, developed by Jennings (2011). This approach is based on attachment styles and early development. Like the Sesame approach,

Jennings acknowledges the role of the voice and deep listening in the formation of safe mother-child interaction (p. 78). As in Austin's vocal holding and MTS, the dialogue is vocalised directly from the body.

In terms of the benefits of the Sesame approach, Natan (2011) applied and developed some techniques of the Sesame approach with a group of dramatherapists. Over the eight weeks of their work together, he offered the participants opportunities to explore themselves through 'stories and drama, voice, embodiment and movement, play and the use of touch' (Natan, 2011, p.28). The idea was that the therapist might learn how to initiate the client's freer expression. To do this, the therapist must first discover his/her suppressed voice within – 'to experience the voices of joy, anger, curiosity and pleasure that the adult within us has suppressed. Expressing our own sounds in the course of a session can encourage clients to do so as well' (p.32). Natan (2011) found that movement and metaphor stopped the participants from being self-conscious: 'The conscious mind, in the role of "judge and critic", vanished and unconscious vocal images found expression' (pp. 31-32). These activities promoted their self-confidence and facilitated acceptance of the various levels of their voice.

#### *Fitzmaurice Voicework®*

The Fitzmaurice Voicework was founded and developed in the 1970s by Irish/American actress Catherine Fitzmaurice (Fitzmaurice Voicework, 2014). This approach is body-based and includes breathing and embodied vocalising for acting and therapeutic purposes. Her concepts of Destructuring and Restructuring were developed from Wilhelm Reich's legacy of body-based therapies (Morgan, 2012, p. 27). Destructuring helps develop vocal production and Restructuring helps build concentration and clarity of thought and emotion in oral communication (Watson and Nayak, 2014). The Destructuring practice enhances a 'dialogue' between the sympathetic and the

parasympathetic parts of the client. The Restructuring process shapes the ‘chaos’ into form with the support of the Central Nervous System (Bruun, 2015, p.11). Oscillating between Destructuring and Restructuring initiates the exploration of unconscious psychosomatic layers. Over time, this dialogue softens, and releases entrenched muscular tensions holding blocked psychic energy (Morgan, 2012, p.37).

The benefits of using these different approaches seem to resonate with drama therapist Sharon Hall’s (2005) exploration of the therapeutic potential of song in dramatherapy. Hall (2005) found four key areas of the therapeutic value of song in the practice of dramatherapy: the use of song to build unity, song as a form of self-expression, song as a way of emotional identification with others and finally song as a way to unlocking unconscious material’ (p. 14). The authors included in this section consider sound and song to facilitate greater self-expression and release somatic blockages and unconscious material. In a group context, listeners and vocalisers alike felt less alone and less isolated in their problems when they could sing their problems and their sounds were heard. Additionally, adopting a ‘role’ or character, such as a baby, a child, a singer, or performer, enabled individuals to safely experience and express feelings that often remain untapped and unheard (Knight, 1993). Playing with the voice seems to allow people to experiment with different ways of expressing themselves and become aware of, and gain liberation from, personal inhibitions (Natan, 2011). Most of the authors named here have demonstrated case examples from group work, and more research into the clinical application with individuals would enrich understanding of how integration of voice in these approaches may enhance therapeutic practice.

## **Intermodal Expressive Arts Therapy**

Paul Newham is frequently cited throughout this literature review. Newham is a singing teacher and noticed the psychological component of his experience while teaching voice. Newham's intrigue with the therapeutic aspects of the voice led him to study the therapeutic application of the voice extensively. The development of his own therapeutic teaching was underpinned by the voice's use for him as a probe with which to investigate the complexity of his personality. Newham (1998) created a body-based, multi-modal vocal approach called 'Therapeutic Voicework', which begins with clients making spontaneous sounds while the practitioner listens, examines and adjusts the body, and gives instruction in various ways of moving. The practitioner may suggest moods and images, helping the client to understand the emotions and sensations arising throughout the session and relating them to the client's life. Newham's work offers in-depth theoretical understanding and practical integration of therapeutic voicework and psychotherapy. Newham's extensive research has made an enormous contribution to my understanding of the theoretical foundations of voicework.

Expressive arts therapist Natalie Rogers integrated voicework into her person-centred multimodal-arts approach. Rogers' inclusion of sound in her approach originated from her experiences at workshops that deepened her connection with her voice. Rogers cautioned her readers about using sound without intention. Rogers (1993) wrote, '[s]ound brings us very deep emotional experiences. My own sense of it is that sound is the element that can crack the cosmic egg. It is a potent force to be respected' (p. 26). The role of the therapist in expressive arts therapy is to offer a safe container in which the client may create, using whatever modality the client chooses. Despite Rogers' inclusion of voicework in her book, she does not offer any specific methods for how to approach working with the voice in a person-centred, expressive arts

therapy session, nor did I find an evidence-based or empirical person-centred theoretical understanding for how to use the voice in practice.

Laury Rappaport is an art therapist who created a combined method of Eugene Gendlin's Focusing and Expressive Arts Therapy, which she calls Focused-Oriented Art Therapy (FOAT). In Rappaport's FOAT method (2010), she invites her clients to connect with their felt experience in a variety of ways including visual art, movement, and sound. Rappaport's work opens the door for sound to enter the Focusing realm. However, detailed clinical examples are lacking to give practitioners practical guidance and theoretical understanding of using sound in her approach.

I have explained how arts therapies have used the voice as an extension of a given approach. While most of the arts therapies have the voice on the periphery of the models, Paul Newham has developed a full vocal-based methodology, through which movement and art enhance therapeutic voicework, and psychotherapy theory helps navigate the psychological terrains of clients. Newham's approach uses vocal pedagogy to guide the physical mechanisms needed for safe and ethical practice. This part of the literature review has broadened my understanding of what is possible with the voice, as it has been used across disciplines and enhanced methods. The literature review indicates that in-depth case studies with individuals exploring how the voice is therapeutic could assist in revealing processes involved in experiences of using the voice as a healing tool.

## **Part 2: A Search through Non-Clinical Contexts**

### **2.5: Singing for Health and Wellbeing Studies**

This section explores qualitative and quantitative studies that have looked at the healing potential of the voice through a variety of vocal practices to grasp the perspectives and methodologies researchers have used in the field of singing for health and well-being. I aim to

understand what the recent research has discovered about the voice as a therapeutic tool, outside clinical contexts. To elucidate the findings, I have organised the information based on the different health and wellbeing scopes focused on in the studies.

### **Large Studies and Systematic Reviews**

Research into the field of singing for health and wellbeing has been growing, especially in the last two decades, with several large-scale studies and systematic reviews. In 2008, a systematic mapping of the empirical literature on singing and wellbeing found thirty-five papers for review (Clift *et al.*, 2010). These studies were highly variable in terms of weight, sample size, characteristics of participants, and the nature of singing investigated, method and approach to analysis. The key finding was that group singing could be a powerful experience that could contribute to quality of life, health, and wellbeing. Clift and Hancox's (2010) research looked at the significance of choral singing for sustaining psychological wellbeing. 1100 choristers from 21 choirs in three countries: England, Australia, and Germany. Through surveys, it was found that regular group singing substantially improved wellbeing among people with enduring mental health problems. In 2016, a mixed-method systematic review was published to investigate the effect of group singing on health-related quality of life for adult amateur singers with chronic health conditions (Reagon *et al.*, 2016). The authors found that singing effectively supported well-being. The most recent systematic review covered a wide range of musical activities, which also concluded that '[t]here is reliable evidence for positive effects of music and singing on wellbeing in adults' (Daykin *et al.*, 2018).

### **Choral Singing**

Of the twenty-seven (27) studies included in this part of the review, eighteen (18) focus on participation in a choral group. Most of these studies cover the benefits of singing for those



involved in choral singing (Bailey & Davidson, 2002, 2003, 2005; Clark & Harding, 2012; Clift *et al.*, 2010; Clift & Hancox, 2001, 2010; Clift & Morrison 2011; Summers, 1999; Unwin, Kenny, & Davis, 2002). It makes sense that most of the research in this field would surround choral and group singing, considering that in Western countries these are the most common and accessible forms of non-professional musical activity (Einarsdottir & Gudmundsdottir, 2015). These studies provide strong evidence to suggest that singing supports wellbeing (Bailey & Davidson, 2005; Clark & Harding, 2012; Grape *et al.*, 2002; Unwin *et al.*, 2002) is beneficial for low mood and stress (Eyre, 2011; Linnemann *et al.*, 2017; Unwin *et al.*, 2002), provides a sense of meaning in life (Balsnes, 2012; Clift *et al.*, 2010) builds self-esteem and self-confidence (Durrant & Himonides, 1998), gives a sense of personal transcendence (Clift *et al.*, 2010), and enhances the social and emotional spheres of life (Baird, 2008; Clift & Hancox, 2001; Litawa 2018; Silber, 2005). Overall, most choristers in these studies reported social, emotional, psychological, and spiritual benefits (Bailey & Davidson, 2005; Clift & Hancox, 2001; Tonneijck *et al.*, 2008; Unwin *et al.*, 2002). In Tonneijck and colleagues' (2008) study, choir members' experiences were interpreted as 'enacting wholeness'. This sense of 'wholeness' relates to their inner emotional well-being and behaviour. Choir members also reported a feeling of belonging and acceptance with the other people in the choir. Each of these aspects deepened people's experiences of participating in a choir: of singing and performing, of memorising and concentrating on the repertoire, using songs for emotional expression and release, and gaining a stronger sense of purpose and life meaning within a shared experience.

### **Singing and Mental Health Studies**

In terms of singing and mental health, several studies have explored the experience of singing in choral, group, and solo settings for people with mental health issues. A systematic

review revealed that singing is beneficial for anxiety, depression, and mood with adults with chronic health problems (Clift and Hancox, 2010). Choir members reported that a regular weekly commitment helped them establish a routine, improved their mood, focused their attention and distracted them from negative and preoccupying thoughts, helped to relax them and offered them social support. In 2011, Clift and Morrison explored how group singing fosters mental health and wellbeing. The researchers studied choir practices and performances and used the CORE questionnaire to measure changes in mental distress. Findings revealed that ‘group singing can have substantial benefits in aiding the recovery of people with a history of serious and enduring mental health problems’ (p. 92). Eyre’s (2011) study of people with mental health challenges revealed improvements in self-esteem, coping with stress, comfort in a group, emotional expression, and mood. In a study conducted by Bailey and Davidson (2002), male singers of low socioeconomic status with mental health and addiction challenges reported feeling accepted, included, and ‘normal’ in the singing group, which contrasted with their regular life outside of the choir. Dingle and colleagues’ (2013) study investigated the effects of participating in a choir for people with mental illness and social disadvantage. Members experienced several positive health benefits, such as improved social functioning, improved self-perception, and emotion regulation. They also found negative emotional experiences, including performance anxiety and stress. The findings suggest that with an appropriate level of support, the individuals who experienced adverse effects were able to overcome challenges and enjoy singing and performing to an audience.

### **Studies Focused on Healing through Singing**

Studies that focused on the healing aspects of singing for wellbeing included group and solo settings (Joyce, 1993; Patteson, 2000; Sauvé 2004; Silber 2005; Summers 2014). Joyce

(1993) explored singing's potential to heal and support individual transformation. Through a feminist perspective, Joyce looked at the links between singing's healing potential and human agency, exploring the therapeutic aspects of singing as they relate to social change. In her study (1993) she stated that

Singing was found to be a holistic experience of potentially high degree dependent upon variables of identity, agency, and context. In most favourable conditions, it was clearly a deep holistic experience; the deepest of which was ascribed the term 'home'. (p. 160).

Like Joyce, Patteson (2000) took a feminist view for her research which centred on women's reflections on the value of individual singing lessons. Patteson found that singing helped women who were traumatised to reconnect with body sensation and recover a sense of bodily ownership. Silber (2005) looked at the social effects for women in a prison choir. She found that participation in the choir helped the inmates to 'form new bonds, to accept criticism, to listen and to express, to grow with very little resistance, perhaps precisely due to the nature of the 'protected space' that this alternative community constituted' (p. 251). Sauvé (2004) explored the therapeutic effects of vocal improvisation and found holistic effects on mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual levels. Lastly, Summers (2014) explored the experience of singing as a healing influence for music therapists trained in the Diane Austin model. Summers found that the role of identity, embodiment, and authenticity were pertinent aspects of these singers' experiences. Overall, there is an emphasis on women's experiences. These studies also look at cause and effect relationships and are comprised mainly of dissertations, marking a lack of empirical research on the influence of singing for healing.

## **Physiological Studies**

Physiological studies explore the possible physiological mechanisms that may underpin the subjective experiences in both individual and choral singing. Several studies have investigated the effects of singing on secretory immunoglobulin (sIgA) and cortisol levels of professional (Beck *et al.*, 2000) and amateur (Kreutz *et al.*, 2004) choristers before and after singing. Beck and colleagues (2000) looked at whether choral singing is associated with physiological changes in the immune system and the findings indicated enhanced immune system activity. Differences in cortisol levels between professional and amateur singers were observed, with increasing levels of cortisol for professional singers. Increased sIgA was found in both studies. The results revealed that singers specifically viewed the benefits of singing as highly useful for coping with stress, both with respect to performing and life in general. Grape and colleagues (2002) compared professional and amateur singers during singing lessons and found that professional singers had more cardiovascular fitness than amateur singers and seemed more aroused during singing lessons. Hence, professional singers experienced less well-being compared to amateur singers who had less cardiovascular fitness and less arousal. Amateur singers reported more joy and enthusiasm.

## **Theoretical Perspectives of the Experience of Singing for Health and Wellbeing**

To address the lack of theoretical interpretation of findings, several researchers have adopted non-musical theoretical frameworks and perspectives to produce richer meaning of the experience of singing for health and wellbeing. Bailey and Davidson (2002) compared the experience of choral singing to 'Flow Theory' developed by Csikszentmihalyi (1997) to illustrate the difference between active and passive music participation. Lonsdale and Stewart (2016) compared experiences of singing for individuals and groups. They used the concept of

*entitativity*, which typically refers to the perception of a group as a pure entity, to provide a means for understanding the group processes involved; and *self-determination theory* for interpreting the processes affecting participants as individuals. The ‘musical elitist’ perspective of singing was mentioned by Bunch (1995) in Bailey and Davidson’s (2005) study, to explicate why middle-class singers focused more on techniques and the voice rather than the meaning that could potentially be generated through participation in performance.

## **2.6: Filling the Silent Gaps**

This literature review makes a strong case for the voice as a healing tool. Therapeutic use of the voice has elaborated on several therapies and has shown the voice’s ability to indicate important information about a person’s psychological, physical, and emotional states. The arts therapies are now integrating more vocal interventions into therapy methods. The singing for health and wellbeing field has correspondingly shown that vocal practices are beneficial for healing, health, and wellness in numerous ways. While this library of research makes a convincing case for *what* vocal practices are beneficial for in terms of healing, health and wellbeing, insight into *how* they are healing and transformational is unclear. Moreover, there is less understanding of the key contextual factors and mechanisms through which vocal practices can be beneficial for wellbeing and health (Harré 1972). In the singing for health and wellbeing field, vocal practices are often grouped without distinction, making it unclear how each contribute to better health. Therefore, what I intend to study is *how*, and in what contexts, healing or transformation have occurred for individuals, by uncovering qualities, mechanisms, and processes distinct in each practice and identifying how each is associated with health and wellbeing outcomes.

In music therapy research, voicework has been explored with mostly children and adults with developmental issues, and there is a lack of research into how this intervention may be useful for the mental health of adults. Most studies have not considered the personal histories of the participants, which may make a difference in the results and give a context to their processes of healing. Furthermore, few empirical studies offer in-depth accounts of individuals' experiences (Daykin *et al.*, 2018; Litawa, 2018; Summers, 2014). To address the lack of clarity around how vocal practices are healing for individuals, I will attempt to offer a detailed understanding of what underlies adult individuals' healing outcomes. This study attempts to address another gap within the singing for health and wellbeing field by exploring subjective accounts of men and women involved in a variety of vocal practices through a qualitative research approach and with consideration of personal history. Using psychotherapeutic theory as a tool for understanding how healing and transformation occurred, I can potentially expand theoretical understanding for practitioners within, and outwith, the arts therapies by giving a sense of working with the clients' voices therapeutically through a psychotherapeutic lens. I explain my selection process for the theoretical framework used for this study in section 4.4.

## Chapter 3: Philosophical Tunings

To address the gaps identified in the literature review, I have outlined what I intend to study and the sample I will use to generate data. I have also formulated my research question: *What is the nature and meaning of experiences of vocal creativity, and what can these experiences tell us about the human voice's potential for healing?* Now that I have narrowed down the phenomenon that I wish to study and refined my research questions based on the gaps identified in the literature, I discuss the philosophical tunings that inform my choice of methodology. I start by highlighting some reasons why we do counselling and psychotherapy research, as they influence my selection of methodology. I then clarify my ontological and epistemological philosophical positioning and the theorists that inform these, leading the reader into Chapter 4 where I discuss my choice of Moustakas' heuristic method to answer my research question.

### 3.2: Locating the Study in Psychotherapy

Before explaining how I intend to approach answering my research question, a pertinent point to consider is why people do counselling and psychotherapy research. In *Doing Counselling Research*, McLeod (2015) discusses the importance of closing the gap between research and practice. McLeod identifies several reasons why research is important for practice, three of which are the focus of this study. The first reason is about 'making it possible for practitioners to continue to learn how to do the job better' (p. 10). I address this point with my aim to elaborate on theory by developing alternative perspectives on vocal practices that are considered healing and transformational. I also want to know if studying co-researchers' experiences can broaden understanding of the healing potential of the voice.

The second concerns ‘facilitating the personal and professional development of therapists’ (p. 8). The present study has to do with the development of my different ‘voices’ or my personal and professional roles. The significance of my development is relevant to my work as a therapist and the continued development of our knowledge of what leads to successful therapy outcomes. The quality of character of the therapist inevitably affects the counselling work because of the latter’s profoundly relational nature. Therefore, the personal qualities of the therapist are of intrinsic value to the facilitation of a healing relationship. Developing my own voice, both literally and metaphorically through this research, inevitably increases my ability to help my clients develop their voices because I have lived it myself.

This latter point links to another reason identified by McLeod: ‘maintaining an affirmatory, pluralistic conception of therapy’ (p. 6). Moving in a direction toward helping clients develop freedom in vocal expression is an act of empowerment which McLeod deems as one of the essential goals of counselling and psychotherapy. One of the intentions of this study is to re-define the ethics of the voice, which is to promote the idea that individuals have the right to express their truth, in their own unique way. In studying the processes, contexts, and conditions that help us reclaim our voices, I may also illuminate what silences and restricts our voices. In speaking to those conditions through this research, I wish to perform an ethical act to help others free their voices beyond the restrictions of verbal language and a small vocal range. The stories in this study have the potential to give those silenced the chance to resonate in a shared experience in recovering fuller vocal expression towards greater healing.

### **3.3: Ontology and Epistemology**

Defining the philosophical underpinnings of a research project is one of the basic elements of any research process (Crotty, 1998) and considered a necessary part of an effective



and clear research design (Mason, 2002). Selecting a methodological approach begins with first understanding our ontological and epistemological positioning. Ontology refers to the ‘very nature and essence of things in the social world’ (Mason, 2002, p. 14), whereas epistemology refers to what can be known in relation to a person’s entities of social reality (Mason, 2002). Ontologically, this study takes a relativist stance, rejecting the perspective that reality can be separate from the person (Valle *et al.*, 1989). This positioning can be narrowed down to subjective experience. If experience is subjective, then it means that it is also context-and time-dependent.

Supported by my ontology that reality is subjective, my epistemology, or what I believe constitutes knowledge, is based on the belief that understanding is always being derived from within a person's context and is based on interpretations; therefore, I take an interpretivist stance, which acknowledges that we are always taking something as something. As I mentioned, experiences are subjective and context-dependent, and therefore people’s understanding of their experience is mediated by interpretation. Thus, when I seek to understand someone else's experience, I am re-interpreting the interpreted experiences of others. This is known as a ‘double hermeneutic’ (Giddens, 1987) in that people’s telling of their experience is their own interpretation of it, and my interpretation of their story is the second layer of interpretation. Philosophical hermeneutics attempts to preserve a concept of truth that is meaningful (Woolfolk, 1992, p. 218).

Furthermore, this approach encourages me to understand my own context—my cultural and historical background, biases, and assumptions—to interpret the worlds of others and for clarity on how knowledge is constructed. Instead of searching for ultimate truth, hermeneutics represents knowledge that is co-created within a certain time. Therefore, the framework I am

using for this project is phenomenological-interpretivist: a view that recognises subjectivity and intersubjectivity and upholds that experiences will always be influenced by the researcher's own context (van Manen, 2011). Many phenomenological positions exist that attempt to explain how humans interpret phenomena. In the next section, I discuss my specific approach to phenomenology.

### **3.4: Embodied Phenomenology**

Phenomenology is essentially the study of lived experience or the life-world (van Manen, 1997). The world or reality is not viewed as something separate from the person (Valle *et al.*, 1989). Effectively, interpretive phenomenological research results in a detailed interpretation of the meanings and structures of a phenomenon as it is experienced first-hand (Matua & Van Der Wal, 2015). In terms of my phenomenological stance, this study is positioned somewhere between Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger with the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, which was elaborated on by Eugene Gendlin's embodied phenomenology.

Husserl suggested that only by bracketing away the individual's biases and prejudices is it possible to 'objectively describe' a phenomenon. By doing this, the individual can arrive at a universal description of the world (Husserl & Carins, 1977). Heidegger began his conception of phenomenology by critiquing Husserl's view that we are capable of being neutral when we study things. For Heidegger, humans always have a subjective interest, words already carry complex meanings, and we are always in a context.

Whereas Husserl focused on epistemology, Heidegger believed that ontology is more fundamental and posits the redefining question of Being as more fundamental than how we know things (Heidegger, 1967). In this regard, Heidegger believed that the individual's starting point is his Being-in-the-world. For Heidegger, human reality, or Dasein ('there being'), is constituted by

consciousness in the form of the lifeworld. Therefore, humans are always in a context with meaning attached to it, subject to a time, place, and so forth.

Merleau-Ponty agreed with Heidegger on this point but disagreed with him about the importance of perception. For Heidegger, the Being of beings is primary reality, and this is a notion not accessible to perception (Merleau-Ponty, 1964). Merleau-Ponty also disagreed with Sartre's view that there is 'pure' consciousness which is independent of being (Merleau-Ponty, 1964). Sartre's dichotomisation of reality into being-in-itself and being-for-itself developed relations between modes of being (Bindeman, 2016). Merleau-Ponty argued that these modes of being belonged to consciousness and being in the world. Merleau-Ponty did not think the world was merely an object to be observed by consciousness; rather, he saw the relationship between consciousness and the world as dialogical with an intertwining nature (Bindeman, 2016). The world is experienced as inextricably bound up in a concrete sense with the embodied subject. In his view, phenomenology must focus on the body to prevent its focus from remaining solely on the mind. Therefore, Merleau-Ponty concluded the centre of experience was the body and that bodies are 'lived experience'.

Eugene Gendlin's psychotherapy practice, through which he helps clients engage in their 'felt meaning' of their experience, is another example self-containment, in which the mind-body duality is bridged (Bindeman, 2016). In his appendix to *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning*, Gendlin explains that Merleau Ponty's development of the concept of felt meaning can point out its function in conveying the experience of novel insights and ideas (Gendlin, 1997). When we 'sing the world' we move freely between the opposing fields of sensual feeling and abstract ideation (p. 287, cited in Bindman, 2016).

A point that Gendlin (1994) called into question was Merleau Ponty's emphasis on perception, substituting the 'primacy of the body', and arguing that 'the perceiver is a *living body*' (p. 6). Gendlin (1994) said that

*Perception* inserts a kind of screen between the body and the environment. It is as if the body can relate to its environment only through five little holes in a screen—the five senses.... But it is obvious that bodies relate concretely with their environments, in fact, bodies *are* environmental interaction processes such as breathing, feeding, growing, and so on. (pp. 3-4).

Thus the 'human body .... Lives *immediately* in its environment, both physically and socially' (p.5). Furthermore, Gendlin considers language to be like perception, in that it is like a screen—a second screen. Influenced particularly by the thinking of Heidegger, Gendlin (1994) emphasised that 'the human body .... lives immediately in its environments, both physically and socially, as well as linguistically' (p.5). Gendlin's philosophy considers the processes that allow us to connect deeply with ourselves and create meanings that are not merely relics of language but resonate within our being. Essentially, Gendlin's view is that people can bring their mind and body together to help generate meaning and knowledge through representing the inner bodily experiencing through language. The mind and body interact with each other: the bodily order of our experiencing is organised (and reorganised) by language and thought (Gendlin, 1991). Gendlin describes experiencing as an implicitly meaningful, organic stream of processing that can be directly referred to and felt by the individual in his or her body. While forms or symbols make the bodily order possible, the body can speak back to them in novel, transformative ways.

The present study values the novel ways in which the body may communicate felt meaning through vocal creativity. This study challenges the dominance of verbal language in

counselling research, opening doors for more embodied ways of expressing and knowing. In this research, co-researchers may communicate aspects of their experience that were once nonverbal or preverbal. Gendlin, like Merleau-Ponty, describes a bodily interaction that is before language, that is not fully formed, and that is interactional. In this study, the participants explain their experience using verbal language to symbolise logical understanding of their internal, bodily experience of vocal creativity. Thus, the participants engage both the felt body and the logical mind, checking inwardly that their words match the embodied experience of vocal practices.

The participants' stories arise out of their interpretation of the experience as it involves the mind and body. I then interpret their stories, taking in my own subjective sense of what they say, and translate my understanding into text. In this way, we engage an intersubjective generation of explicit and implicit knowledge. Intersubjectivity is an attempt to understand that we are both, subject and object, where 'the subject **is** his body, his world, and his situation, by a sort of exchange' (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p.72). Through our exchange, we co-create meaning.

Gendlin describes the interaction between our experience and symbols as hermeneutic while remaining verifiable to lived experience. How this is achieved is through a process he calls Focusing. Focusing is a way of paying attention to the 'between' as it resides inside the person's body. Madison (2008) defines this process concisely, 'The bodily felt experience is the intricate interaction of self and world, elaborated by perception and language' (p. 5). According to Levin (1997), 'Gendlin's analysis always directs our attention to the phenomenological and hermeneutical intricacies of meaning-forming and meaning-altering processes [...]' (p. 62).

This study upholds that the voice says much more than words, as it expresses our felt experience to the outer world. As Austin and Monti (2018) point out, '[i]t could be inferred that one's outer voice and one's inner voice are deeply and constantly interconnected, as one's voice

turns thoughts and feelings into sound' (p. 159). Gendlin's concept of embodied language is based on the notion that it is because our words and concepts arise from the body that they make such a strong impact on our being. In another way, words are implicit in our bodies (Gendlin, 1992). I expand on this notion by arguing that the musicality of our words is also part of why our speech has such an impact; although Gendlin does not speak of this aspect of language explicitly.

Gendlin states that while our experiencing is vaster than words, he does not say that it is preverbal. As Gendlin explains in his book *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning: A Philosophical and Psychological Approach to the Subject*, '[w]e are most aware of the dimension of felt meaning when our symbols fail to symbolize adequately what we mean' (Gendlin, 1997, p. 64). Gendlin proposed that language differentiates aspects of the lived situation, which, in turn, calls for specific words and symbols to describe it (Gendlin, 1973). Consequently, our experience of meaning involves associating symbols with felt meanings (Gendlin, 1997, pp. 66-67). Acknowledging Gendlin's proposition here and incorporating my aim to re-define the ethics of the voice, my choice of a methodology partially relies on how it can effectively connect felt meaning and words, allowing for an interplay between them, from which novel understandings and meanings may arise. Gendlin's philosophy seems an appropriate phenomenological approach for generating meaning from both the mind and body.

## **Chapter 4: Methodology and Design**

This section aims to connect my ontology and epistemology with my choice of a heuristic methodology outlined by Moustakas. Taking you, the reader, through my process of selecting the heuristic methodology, I highlight areas of cohesion and contention between the philosophy underlying the present study. Through my discussion, I pinpoint areas of cohesion and contention between the current study's philosophy and Moustakas' heuristic method. Next, I discuss how I adapted Moustakas' heuristic methodology to suit my research aims. Lastly, I outline the specific methods I used to collect data, addressing the ethical implications of these methods, and how I aim to establish the trustworthiness of the study.

### **4.2: Moustakas' Heuristic Method**

Scholars agree that qualitative research is appropriate to achieve the pursuit of subjective experience (Barbour, 2008; Blaikie, 2010; Bryman, 2004; Mason, 2002; Patton, 2002; Silverman, 2010). I chose a qualitative case-based approach to explore the experiences of performance singing, creative singing, and therapeutic voicework, since this approach to research can shed maximum light on the human experience, as lived, in real-life context (Edwards, 1998; Schneider, 1999). To analyse the data from these case studies, I delineate my decision-making process to select the heuristic methodology for my research purposes.

The heuristic method is an approach to research commonly undertaken by researchers working in counselling and psychotherapy, as well as art therapy and psychotherapy (Braud and Anderson 1998; Etherington, 2004; West, 2001). Heuristic inquiry is a qualitative method that uses descriptive accounts of experiences, thoughts, feelings, relationships, values, and beliefs to discover the nature and meaning of a phenomenon and to illuminate it from direct first-person accounts of individuals who have directly encountered a phenomenon in experience (Moustakas,

1990). Clark Moustakas developed heuristic inquiry to uncover the underlying meanings of significant human experiences. Moustakas' development of the heuristic method was influenced by the work of Gendlin (1962), Maslow (1971), Polanyi (1964, 1966, 1969), Rogers (1985), and others. Moustakas also considered Heidegger's *beingness* in all understanding (Guignon, 1983, 1993; Steiner, 1996). Inspired also by Wilber (1995, 1996, 1997), Moustakas' approach emphasises a knowledge system that includes subjective and intersubjective experience, the interior 'I' and the interior 'we', as well as the cultural and intentional. As my study aims to grasp the underlying, subjective and intersubjective, and the internal experiences of people, this methodology seemed suitable for my research purposes; however, as I studied Moustakas' heuristic method further, I found points of contention with the study's philosophical tunings, which I explain in the following paragraphs.

As outlined by Moustakas (1990), the heuristic inquiry is a reflective inquiry that involves internal processes and six phases. The first phase is termed *initial engagement*, and it begins with a question, which gives the researcher a determination to discover the fundamental truth regarding the meaning and essence of one's own experience and that of others. Moustakas (1990) claims that heuristic inquiry is autobiographic and subjective yet states that every important question has a universal significance. These claims mark the first points of contention with this study's philosophy; namely, that a 'fundamental truth' can be known and universals and generalisations can be made from the subjective experience. This conjecture conflicts with this study's relativist ontology, which takes the view that there is no universal, objective truth; instead, each point of view has its own truth. Rather than put this methodology out of court, I continued to test whether the other processes involved harmonised with my philosophical tunings. I return to this conjecture in my discussion of the study's design in section 4.3.



The next phase is *immersion*, in which the researcher becomes alert to all possibilities for meaning as it enters into life with others. According to Douglass and Moustakas (1985, cited in Moustakas 1990), ‘the heuristic scientist seeks to discover the nature and meaning of the phenomenon itself and to illuminate it from direct first-person accounts of individuals who have directly encountered the phenomenon in experience’ (p. 2). The co-researchers’ accounts are formed into ‘individual depictions’ of the phenomenon. This phase also involves the researcher’s engagement with a self-dialogue, whereby the researcher examines his or her own experience.

As I have personal experience of the phenomenon, the centrality of self-disclosure in Moustakas’ method suited my research aims, as I could use my personal experience of each vocal practice as an epistemological tool for understanding. Moustakas (1990) referred to the researcher’s internal frame of reference—the experiences, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings related to a specific topic—as the ‘self of the researcher’ (p. 9). Coming to know better my internal frame of reference enables me to ‘elucidate the context’ (Moustakas, 1990, p. 2) and grasp its form and significance. This aspect of the process seemed cohesive with my stance alongside Gendlin’s hermeneutic phenomenology for the creation of meaning, as it acknowledges that my context influences research findings and that knowledge is co-created. An approach which encourages me to deeply know my context helps me remain reflexive throughout the research process, and it may deepen my understanding of co-researchers’ experiences.

The third phase of *incubation* is a process in which the researcher retreats from the intense, concentrated focus on the question. Intuition and tacit knowing characterise this realm. Tacit knowing is a concept that refers to a basic capacity of the self of the researcher, and manifests the hunches and vague, formless insights that characterise heuristic discovery

(Douglass & Moustakas, 1985). Here the researcher allows space for the inner workings of the tacit dimension and intuition to continue to clarify and extend understanding on levels outside the immediate awareness.

Both Moustakas and Gendlin drew from Michael Polanyi (1966) and his concept of tacit knowing and developed ways for accessing the body-felt dimension of experience. Gendlin used Focusing to access tacit knowing. Moustakas adopted Gendlin's Focusing method as one of the internal processes for generating insight in the heuristic method. In this way, Moustakas' heuristic method supports my aim to include the tacit dimension of experience. To make meaning from that which is not yet formed into words, and what may also be more than words and body felt. Through engaging in these internal processes, I determine the key findings that constitute an experience, identify and assess connecting feelings and thoughts, and achieve cognitive knowledge that includes 'refinements of meaning and perception that register as internal shifts and alterations of behavior' (Douglass and Moustakas, 1985, p. 51).

When the researcher is open to intuition and tacit knowing, the fourth phase of *illumination* naturally occurs. The illumination process may be an awakening of new constituents of the experience, or it may involve modifications of understandings. The purpose of the next phase, *explication*, allows more of what came forth in the illumination phase to continue to unfold the various layers of meaning. In explication, the key ingredients of the phenomenon are discovered, and the researcher explicates the major components, in detail, and is then ready to put them together into a whole experience. This takes the form of a composite depiction which 'includes all of the core meanings of the phenomenon as experienced by the individual participants and by the group as a whole' (Moustakas, 1990, p. 3). Moustakas suggests that the researcher then returns to the individual depictions and selects two or three 'exemplary portraits'

which may represent the group. As I aimed to explore the experiences of three vocal practices and compare these, it was necessary for the scope of this project that I adjust the design suggested by Moustakas. As the exemplary portraits are meant to bring in-depth understanding, I did this by analysing my experience of each vocal practice within a psychotherapy framework.

The final phase is the *creative synthesis*, an original integration of the material that reflects the researcher's intuition, imagination, and personal knowledge of meanings of the experience. The creative synthesis may take the form of a lyrical poem, a song, a narrative description, a story, or a metaphoric tale. In this way, the experience is presented as a whole, and, unlike most research studies, the individual persons remain intact. Moustakas' encouragement of using alternative ways of generating knowledge could assist my intention to re-define the ethics of the voice and engage alternative ways of knowing beyond the norms of traditional academic research. Using a methodology that permits the use of embodied ways of generating knowledge, I take an active stance to model my quest to re-define the ethics of the voice and integrate the mind and body in line with Gendlin's embodied phenomenology. At this point, the heuristic method seemed suitable for my purposes. However, to resolve the points of contention I mentioned above, I needed to adapt Moustakas' method to ensure my study remained cohesive.

#### **4.3: Designing a Heuristic Comparison**

Comparing different vocal practices requires that I modify aspects of the process outlined by Moustakas to achieve this study's aims. The heuristic method is not meant to be prescriptive, as Bridgman (1950, cited in Moustakas, 1990) argued, the heuristic scientist 'is not consciously following any prescribed course of action, but feels complete freedom to utilize any method or device whatever which in the particular situation [...] seems likely to yield the correct answer'

(p. 7). The word ‘heuristic’ is derived from the Greek word, *heuriskein*, meaning to discover or to find, and ‘refers to a process of internal search through which one discovers the nature and meaning of experience and develops methods and procedures for further investigation and analysis’ (Moustakas, 1990, p. 9). Concentrating on the intersubjective co-creation of knowledge within an interpretivist research paradigm, I modify the heuristic method while holding the integrity of the co-researchers’ stories. Therefore, for this part of the process, I design what Hiles (2001) calls a *heuristic comparison*. The main difference between a heuristic comparison and Moustakas’ methodology is that I am not seeking to overcome differences to explicate universals or generalisations; instead, I acknowledge differences and similarities with my design, as these are illuminated through my comparative analysis. In the following section, I go through my process for analysis as it is informed by Moustakas (1990) and Hiles (2001), noting any deviations from Moustakas’ original design. Figure 1 below is a chart illustrating illustrating the process I followed, which is outlined in detail in the subsections.

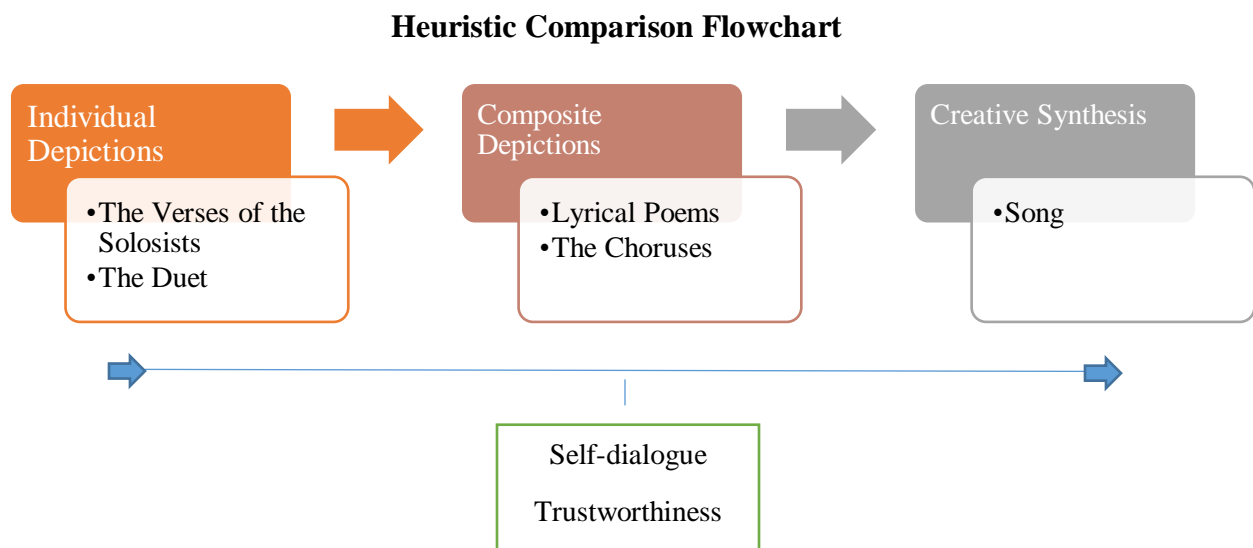


Figure 1: This Heuristic Comparison Flowchart starts with the individual depictions and ends with the creative synthesis. I include self-dialogue and trustworthiness as part of each phase of the analysis.

#### **4.4: Individual Depictions: The Verses of the Soloists and the Duet**

The first stage of the analysis is creating individual depictions featuring the core themes derived from the interviews. According to Moustakas (1990), the focus of the heuristic quest is a recreation of the full, lived experience. The challenge is fulfilled through creative depictions such as through artwork, poems or narrative descriptions to help access the tacit dimension of the experience. For this study, I titled the individual depictions ‘The Verses of the Soloists’. I chose to create ‘vocal stories’ in which the co-researchers’ experiences were made into first-person narratives.

##### **The Verses of the Soloists**

The process of turning data into a meaningful story required that I reflexively connect our experiences in ways that each person's story challenged and deepened my understanding of my own life, and my own experiences, to heighten my comprehension of theirs (Kiesinger, 1998). I turned to Kiesinger's (1998) stages for constructing a meaningful story. Dr. Kiesinger is an assistant professor at the Department of Theatre and Communications at Southwestern University. Kiesinger's research aims to capture the details of lived experience in descriptive, evocative ways. Kiesinger's stages for creating a meaningful story from an interview include *framing*, *voice* and *tense*, constructing *scenes*, *episodes*, *dialogue*, and *reflexive stance*.

As Kiesinger (1998) advises, to *frame* the stories, I spent time considering what I wanted each story to convey and what the co-researchers wanted to get across with their stories. After reviewing their interviews and transcribing them, I extracted lengthy stretches of discourse and turned these fragmented ‘episodes’ into a narrative. Since my focus was on comparing vocal practices, I grasped a sense of which vocal practice was most salient to each co-researcher and

used this as a frame for their story. The feelings, thoughts, and experiences surrounding the vocal practice were then drawn out to create a composite depiction for each group.

Regarding *voice* and *tense*, I chose to use the first person as a mode of narration to help me enter the subjective experience of each co-researcher. As for *episodes*, *scenes* and *dialogue*, I focused on constructing a scene to set the stage for the stories and give a sense of the group as a whole. For each story, I chose to write a memoir of co-researchers' relationship with their voice, or a collection of memories, moments, or events that took place throughout their life to give a context to their healing. Lastly, in writing each person's account, I spent time to immerse myself in the details of their lives. This involved me listening to their recorded interviews, reading the transcribed material, and carefully considering all the main turning points. When writing, I tried to imagine how each would say it, attempting to give a sense of their own pace and phrasing. In writing these stories, I came to understand my own story better, and understanding myself significantly enhanced my sense of the co-researchers' stories.

### **The Duet**

In Chapter 5, my autobiographical contributions frame my co-researchers' verses. I answered the interview questions in my own verse, engaging my subjectivity as a fundamental element of heuristic inquiry. It is through the researcher's internal search—a disciplined and systematic process of scientific investigation—that knowledge of the nature of the phenomenon is deepened, and self-discovery and self-awareness are broadened. To depict my process of self-discovery through sound, and to reflect our hermeneutic process in our co-researching journey, I articulate my experience of each vocal practice to 'elucidate the context' and grasp the phenomenon's core meanings (Moustakas, 1990). In this sense, heuristic research is autobiographical, in that I sought to understand not only the nature and meaning of the phenomenon but also my own experience and personal understandings of it. To further elucidate

my process of therapeutic change, I chose to use Process-Experiential Theory to analyse my experience. This was in order to address the lack of theoretical understanding for vocal practices within standard counselling and psychotherapy, filling a gap in knowledge within the humanistic approaches, and contributing alternative perspectives on vocal practices for the arts therapies.

The development of Process-Experiential Theory has roots in Gendlin's philosophy and his notion of *experiencing*, which elaborated on Carl Rogers' concept of *experience*. Carl Rogers (1959) defines experience as the physiological and physical events that are present or could be present under different circumstances in the individual's immediate awareness. Contrastingly, Gendlin (1962) describes experiencing as an implicitly meaningful, organic stream of processing that can be directly referred to and felt by the individual in his or her body. Aspects of Gendlin's philosophy and practical approach later evolved with the development of Emotion-Focused Therapy (EFT). EFT incorporates Gendlin's view of experiencing as the first of six key neo-humanistic core values, which the approach strives to foster: immediate experiencing, presence/authenticity, agency/self-determination, wholeness, pluralism/diversity, and growth. EFT is an empirically supported, neo-humanistic approach built on Process-Experiential Theory (PE theory). PE theory integrates person-centred, Gestalt, and existential therapies, and has been updated by emotion theory (Greenberg, 2002; Greenberg & Paivio, 1997; Greenberg & Safran, 1987) and a dialectical constructivist view of self (Elliott & Greenberg, 1997; Greenberg & Pascual-Leone, 1995). After I completed the data collection and analysis of the co-researchers' experiences, these theories enabled me to unlock deeper meanings.

Emotions theory says that emotion is fundamentally adaptive and central to dysfunction and change. Thus, an appreciation of the forms, structure, and variety of emotion processes is an essential basis for practice. A key emotion theory concept is emotion schemes. Emotion schemes

are implicit, idiosyncratic structures of human experience that serve as the basis for self-organisation, including consciousness, action, and identity (Greenberg *et al.*, 1993; Greenberg & Paivio, 1997; cited in Elliott *et al.*, 2004). Therapists help clients reflect on and reevaluate emotion schemes and expose themselves to more adaptive emotional responses (Greenberg & Paivio, 1997). In general, PE-EFT is an approach that seeks to help clients transform contradictions into sources for growth. PE theory sees emotion schemes in dialectically constructive terms, forming self-organising structures that are ever-changing, but seemingly stable because they are often repeated.

Consistent with its neo-humanistic philosophy of dialectical constructivism, PE-EFT sees human beings as constituted by multiple parts or ‘voices’. The notion of a dialectical constructivist view of self correlates with authors in the literature review who declared that the voice could be used to work with what Carl Jung referred to as, ‘subpersonalities’. Austin (2018) later referred to these subpersonalities as ‘parts of self’. Similarly, EFT practitioners often use the term ‘voices’ to represent the self-organisations formed through emotion schemes. Both Austin and PE-EFT consider internal parts as dialectic, meaning that the therapist can help clients engage a dialogue between the different self-parts. Austin uses techniques such as ‘free associative singing’ and ‘vocal holding’ to facilitate a musical interplay between parts of self. Emotion theory and a dialectical constructivist view of self can offer an alternative perspective on the therapeutic dialogue between the voices, which may be more accessible for practitioners who do not have proficient knowledge or skills in music. In addition to the alternative perspectives this integration may provide, this theoretical framework could also suggest new tasks that incorporate sound for the practice of EFT. Overall, integration of PE theory and vocal creativity is meant to develop an understanding of how change occurred.



#### **4.5: Composite Depictions: The Choruses**

The totality of the individual depictions' themes is pulled together into one place to form the 'composite depiction' for each group. The verses were categorised based on my interpretation of the emphasis the co-researcher placed on that practice in the interview and the similarities found in co-researchers' experiences. The main vocal practice was therefore gradually negotiated as I revisited themes to construct the verses. Essentially, the choruses reflect the key findings and concentrate each group's collective experience. I have chosen to write a lyrical poem for the composite depictions of the groups, offering an alternative and artistic representation of the key findings. The raw data thus was transformed 'into artistic forms that attempt[ed] to lead to successful communication of profound inner experiences from one human being to another' (Wadsworth-Hervey, 2000, p.113).

This process is accompanied by a heuristic comparison whereby I looked across each chorus and illuminated the key findings of each group. This is where I adapted Moustakas' methodology using an approach suggested by Hiles (2001). As Hiles suggests, in a heuristic comparison, I phenomenologically engaged with the different practices. I examined and re-examined the composite depictions, drawing out similarities and differences. Further exploration, discernment, and distinctions were made about the experiences, always returning to the comparison that is the focus of the study. My comparative discussion is found in Chapter 6.

#### **4.6: Creative Synthesis: The Song**

Pulling together these different strands of analysis, Moustakas (1990) suggests the creation of a 'creative synthesis' of the phenomenon. Moustakas explains that by creating artwork, 'the researcher taps into imaginative and contemplative sources of knowledge and insight in synthesizing the experience, in presenting the discovery of essences, peaks and valleys,

highlights and horizons. Free reign of thought and feeling that supports the researcher's knowledge, passion, and presence' (p. 52). Moustakas (1990) describes the creative synthesis as an original integration that reflects the culmination of the researcher's knowledge of the meanings of the experience. To complete the collective composition, I creatively synthesised the themes in the form of a song.

#### **4.7: Lyrical Poems and Songs as Inquiry**

An essential part of my creative process for composing the artistic renditions of the findings was the ongoing dialogue and exchange between my mind and body through verbal (written) forms and artistic forms (songs and lyrical poems). A body dialogue was created through embodied practices of voicework and songwriting, thus facilitating a transfer from implicit to explicit ways of knowing. The practices of voicework, performance singing, and songwriting enabled me to deeply engage with Moustakas' internal phases of focusing, indwelling, intuition, and tacit knowing. Arising from these creative and embodied processes were feeling experiences and bodily sensations, whereby the language of the body and unconscious material located therein could be heard and brought into conscious awareness. The artworks are followed by the written depictions, reflecting a parallel process in which the experience of vocal creativity is followed by the co-researchers' verbal explication of their experience of the phenomenon. In this way, McNiff's (1993, 1998) proposal of the dialogue with the artwork is used. For McNiff, dialoguing with the artwork is more important than the interpretation based on our projections of what the meaning could be. Through this dialogue, I attempt to gain fuller, more accurate knowledge of the experience through consideration of the tacit dimension.

Engaging artistic methods of gathering and analysing data and of presenting findings, I followed Wadsworth-Hervey's (2000) process for transforming the written results into the artistic form of song and lyrical poems. Panhofer (2011) outlines Wadsworth's process concisely:

In order to transform something (a movement, writing, image, etc.) into a piece of art, Wadsworth explains a process, from the initial awareness of the researcher (something awakens interest and curiosity), the decontextualisation and intentional re-creation of the original object (the something is repeated, this time with intention), its appreciation and discrimination (decision making takes place if the object is still of use), further refinement and transformation (more changes are undertaken until the artist/researcher is satisfied), to its final recontextualisation (the creation is placed in an appropriate environment to be appreciated by others, just like a final thesis may be placed in the library of the university). (p. 458).

In the following section, I bring together the different processes and the theoretical frameworks that informed them, which I engaged in throughout my heuristic inquiry.

#### **4.8: Navigating my Heuristic Journey**

The methodological process is related to the different theoretical frameworks mentioned above. Figure 2 is a chart that depicts my process of self-inquiry alongside the development of my co-researchers' contributions. My journey followed a messy hermeneutic cycle, contrary to the apparent orderliness of this chart.

## My Heuristic Journey

	Collecting Data		Analysing Data			Presenting Findings
<b>Theoretical Approaches</b>	>Initial awareness >Decontextualisation and intentional re-creation of the original object (Wadsworth-Hervey, 2000) >Self-dialogue (Moustakas, 1990) >Conversational interviews (Patton, 1980)		>Further refinement and transformation (Wadsworth-Hervey, 2000) >Individual Depictions (Verses) (Moustakas, 1990) - turning interviews into meaningful stories (Kiesinger, 1998) >Composite Depictions (Choruses) (Moustakas, 1990) >Creative Synthesis (Moustakas, 1990) >Dialogue as another form of artistic data analysis (McNiff, 1993, 1998) >PE theory analysis (Elliot <i>et al.</i> , 2004) > heuristic comparison, interpreting similarities and differences (Hiles, 2000)			>Final recontextualisation (Wadsworth-Harvey, 2000)
<b>Researcher's Self-inquiry</b>	<b>Initial data generation:</b> Reviewed and wrote songs, read journal entries, discussed my relationship with my voice with my therapist, wrote autobiographical reflections	<b>Deepening the data:</b> Workshops/written reflections on the researcher's experience in the workshops	<b>Formal analysis:</b> -Researcher answered interview questions -Wrote personal verse -analyses through PE theory -Reflected on the meaning and significance of DJ's song in the verse	<b>Creative analysis:</b> Wrote DJ's Song	<b>Shaping the findings:</b> -Identified key findings through comparison, drawing-out underlying mechanisms, and explicating processes of the research participants (including primary researcher).	<b>Final Presentation:</b> A collection of verses, choruses, and audio and written versions of the lyrical poems, and songs, followed by a compare and contrast of the key findings, underlying mechanisms, and processes.
<b>Co-researchers</b>	<b>Further data generation:</b> Recorded in-person and Skype interviews	<b>Deepening the data:</b> -Listened and Transcribed interviews -Drew out key themes	<b>Formal analysis:</b> -Wrote verses -Categorised vocal creativity groups based on vocal practice and shared themes -Formulated written versions of the key findings in the choruses	<b>Creative analysis:</b> -Created the lyrical poems -Recorded all the songs	<b>Shaping the findings:</b> -Wrote creative synthesis bringing together all the experiences of vocal creativity	

Figure 2: This flow chart illustrates my journey from the initial engagement to the process of collecting and analysing the data and presenting the findings and their theoretical approaches.

#### **4.9: Methods**

As depicted in Figure 2, I looked at three methods for collecting data. The first method involved immersion in my personal question. I engaged in a self-dialogue to grasp what the voice means for me in preparation for understanding others' experiences. Second, I participated in two workshops and reflected on my experience of each, enabling further experiential insight into therapeutic voicework. Third, I interviewed participants so that the experience might reveal itself more completely.

##### **Self-dialogue**

The process of self-dialogue was continuous throughout my research, increasing the reliability within my study by identifying my position regarding the research (Merriam, 1998). I looked at personal journal entries and songs and discussed my relationship with my voice with my therapist in a bid to grasp the meaning of the voice as a healing influence in my life. I engaged in all the vocal practices included in this inquiry, paying close attention to my experience of each. Conducting the interviews and noticing resonance and dissonance between mine and co-researchers' stories further assisted understanding of my healing journey with my voice and the phenomenon as a whole. Writing songs and participating in workshops deepened my insight into the voice and its place in my life, as it gave me a chance to engage my embodied knowledge. The culmination of my insight served my ability to remain reflexive and cultivated in me a rich understanding of the meaning of the voice for healing, as experienced by the people in this study.

##### **Workshops**

I already had experience with creative singing and performance singing before this inquiry. To gain experience of therapeutic voicework, I took on a participant role in a workshop

facilitated by three people trained in Chloe Goodchild's approach to singing for personal development. The first workshop was held in Edinburgh in March 2017. The objective of the workshop was to help participants heal through voice and movement exercises. Many of the participants attended this workshop in search of opportunities for growth and transformation through voicework, which I thought may suit my research purposes.

Additionally, I hoped I might recruit participants for an interview. This workshop had about ten people of different ages and ethnic backgrounds who had experienced different contexts of vocal practices. I observed the other participants, but I only reflected on my experience of the workshop to generate data. See Appendix A for information I shared with the facilitators and other attendees about my research.

The second workshop was similar to the first and took place seven months after it. This time, the workshop was larger, with about twenty-five people, and Chloe Goodchild facilitated the group. The facilitators from the first workshop attended and took part in the group processes. The workshop had similar aims but went on for three days, rather than one. This allowed the group to go deeper into some of the activities and exercises used in the first workshop. See Appendix B for information I shared with attendees and facilitators about my doctoral project.

### **Co-researchers**

The co-researchers in this study were selected primarily because they believed they had healed or transformed through singing or voicework. The participants engaged in an array of vocal practices opening the possibility for comparison and identification of qualities and processes that characterise each. Three of the therapeutic voicework participants were recruited from the workshops. Six of the co-researchers were acquaintances of mine, and they were invited to participate based on my knowledge that they had used vocal practices as forms of self-therapy.

One participant was recruited through word-of-mouth. Overall, I was interested in recruiting people who had a keen awareness of their voice. All the participants were given the research questions before the interview to check whether they felt they could reflect on the questions in-depth. Participants for this study came from several countries, including the United States, Spain, and England. The age range of the participants was between 25-67 years old. Four men and six women took part in this study. Each participant is introduced before their individual depictions to give the reader a context to their story.

## **Interviews**

Moustakas (1990) suggests that the conversational interview is most consistent with the ‘rhythm and flow of heuristic exploration and search for meaning’ (p. 47). Also known as the informal, conversational interview explicated by Patton (1980, pp. 197–198), this way of interviewing relies on the spontaneous generation of questions and conversations in which the co-researcher participates in natural, unfolding dialogue with the primary investigator. As a counsellor, this approach felt natural and one that seemed to elicit full disclosure from co-researchers. I shared some of my own experiences as they inspired richer and fuller depictions of the experience. Moustakas (1990) provides guiding questions which I adapted for my study, but not every question in the guide was asked in the interviews. Moustakas states that although general questions may be formulated in advance, genuine dialogue cannot be planned. These general questions were given to the participants in preparation for the interview so that co-researchers could reflect on their experience before the interview was conducted. The questions guide is in Appendix C.

The central guiding question: *What has been your experience of voicework or singing as healing or transformational?* I intended for this question to be powerful enough to sustain my

interest but broad enough so as not to put limits on the co-researchers' experiences, opening them to all the possible personal constituents of the phenomenon. In sharing my experiences with co-researchers, 'associations multiply as personal experiences bring the core of the problem into focus' (Moustakas, 1990, p. 41). Moustakas (1990) states that these interviews 'often take the form of dialogues with oneself and one's research participants' (p. 39). Through the co-creation of this dialogue, we appreciated the subjective experience of each other, extending understanding of what it is like for each other and grasping the core themes of the phenomenon. Other questions I might have asked include:

- What about the experience of singing and voicework stands out for you? What examples are vivid and alive?

Moustakas wants to help the researcher get at the lived experiences of the phenomenon, so this question aims to help the participant get a strong sense of what it is like to engage in vocal creativity.

- What has your experience of your voice been like throughout your life?

This question was not guided by Moustakas but rather the literature review and its lack of consideration of participants' historical relationship with their voice. This question is intended to expand co-researchers' accounts of their experiences with their voice providing a context for understanding their health and wellbeing outcomes and the significance of their experiences for them.

- What feelings or thoughts generate in your experience of singing and voicework?

This question was inspired by Moustakas (1990) and fitted well with Gendlin's philosophy around grasping at the felt experiencing and qualities of the experience.



- What time and space factors affect your awareness and the meaning of your experience of using your voice?

Knowing that these subjective experiences are context-specific, I may have asked this question to see how context affects co-researchers' experiences of their voice.

- What bodily states or shifts in body presence occur in your experience of singing?

Rooting participants in their bodies as a source of knowledge, they may consider the physical aspects of their experience to connect them with their felt experience of the phenomenon.

- Do you feel that you shared all the significant ingredients or constituents of the experience?

This last question is an opportunity for participants to reflect on what they have shared and consider whether they have communicated their experience fully. Any further insights may be conjured and explained here.

Along with my co-researchers, I also addressed these interview questions in my autobiographical contributions (see 1.2, 5.2, 5.6). My responses to these questions interact with my co-researchers' in several ways. First, through my personal voice, I present my own context to illuminate the frame of reference from which I interpret the stories of my co-researchers. In Chapter 1, I explain some of my experiences with my voice and my clients' voices as a starting point for understanding my motivation for this study. Second, in Chapter 5, my verse frames my co-researchers', starting with the 'Intro'. In the intro, my personal voice returns, carrying on from Chapter 1, and going deeper into my personal location in the research. Subsequently, I present the co-researchers' verses and choruses to illustrate our hermeneutic, co-creation of knowledge. In the 'Outro' I explain what I gathered from the verses of my co-researchers and how their stories impacted my journey. This explanation is followed by a 'duet' between my personal

voice and my researcher voice. In the duet, I try to capture a sense of my co-researchers accompanying me throughout my journey, as they inspired certain vocal practices, and supported me with their accounts. Chapter 5 is completed with a song in which all our voices come together. Each group is represented through a verse in the song and our shared experience is captured in the chorus. The ways in which the co-researchers' experiences inspired my process are explained at the end of Chapter 6 (see 6.2.2), where I discuss the processes of vocal creativity.

#### **4.10: Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness refers to the notion that the reader or the audience of a study interprets the research as worthwhile. The overall aim is to conduct a study that is worthwhile and represents participants as accurately as possible. A number of criteria can be used to establish the trustworthiness of a study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) provide an evaluative criterion for establishing trustworthiness, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. This study has addressed Lincoln and Guba's criteria in the following ways.

To establish credibility or the confidence in the 'truth' of the findings, I started with selecting a methodology that would give me range, depth, and capture whole experience. Moustakas' heuristic method is commonly used in counselling and psychotherapy research to capture the wholeness of lived experience rather than focusing solely on its objects or parts. Through this method, the researcher gathers rich descriptions of experience through first-person accounts. Triangulation was a means whereby I aimed to enhance the credibility of the study. I used my own perspective and the perspectives of co-researchers for multiple referents to draw-out key findings. In this way, individual experiences could be validated against others, and a rich

picture of the patterns, qualities, and processes of those under scrutiny could be constructed in line with the contributions of a range of individuals.

Transferability implies that the results of the research study can be applied to similar situations or individuals. Lincoln & Guba (1985) said, '[i]t is, in summary, not the naturalist's task to provide an index of transferability, it is his or her responsibility to provide the data base that makes transferability judgements possible on the part of potential appliers' (p. 36). To meet this criterion, I provided full descriptions of the phenomenon under analysis, offering both written and artistic forms of the key findings. I also included our backgrounds and definitions of healing and transformation. These detailed descriptions helped me to express the actual situations which have been researched and, to an extent, the contexts which surround them.

Dependability may be defined as showing that the findings are consistent and repeatable. In Chapter 6, I connect my research findings with other studies that drew similar and different conclusions. Making these links between other research studies demonstrates ways in which my research repeated previous research findings and contributed deeper insights to similar studies that took place in different contexts. Furthermore, the experiences of the participants were compared to show repetition and consistency, or not, between their experiences of the vocal practice discussed.

Confirmability is intended to verify that the findings are shaped by participants more so than a qualitative researcher shapes them. To establish confirmability, I asked co-researchers to verify the accuracy of the verse I constructed for them. All but one of the co-researchers opted to confirm the accuracy of my interpretation of their interview. I also remained reflexive throughout the research process, mindful of my subjectivity, biases, context, and my values and interests. To make my process as transparent as possible, I include my personal experience, along with tables

(Tables 5-9) showing the themes I drew from the co-researchers' experiences, and figures (Figures 1 & 2) to illustrate my heuristic journey and our backgrounds/definitions. In the final chapter, I return to these points in the limitations section to consider weaknesses in meeting these criteria.

#### **4.11: Ethical Considerations**

The ethical considerations for participating in the first workshop were mostly to do with the delicate balance of dual roles. As a researcher and a participant, I intended to be present with challenges foreseen and unforeseen. Regarding the difficulties anticipated, I provided the workshop attendees with an information sheet to be transparent about my dual roles (Appendices A & B). Another aspect of my dual role was striking a balance between being part of the group and remaining distant enough to maintain reflexivity. One way that I maintained this balance was by refraining from answering questions that people had about my experience of the workshop. In this way, I created a boundary between my participation and my research to protect participants and the integrity of the study.

Since I reflected on my experience of others in the workshop, I ensured attendees' confidentiality. Any identifiers of the attendees were held within the university's protected file. When writing my notes, I used pseudonyms to protect identities. I informed the workshop participants that their identities would remain confidential before we began the workshop by way of the information sheet. The information sheet stated that my role as a researcher would not impinge upon the workshop facilitators or the already stated objectives. Participants would also be able to opt out of my personal reflections if they want to be excluded entirely.

Nevertheless, attendees were informed that I was a researcher, and this may have had an impact on them in the workshop. I intended to minimise the risk of them behaving in ways

influenced by their knowledge of my role as a researcher. I did this by learning the norms of the group to ensure that its members could act naturally. I stayed mindful of how I was in the group and communicated my openness to them sharing how my presence may have impacted on them. I protected those who participated in my study through reflexivity, and I monitored my motivations and reactions as I participated in the workshop, as this would inevitably affect how the knowledge would be constructed. Throughout undertaking this research, I remained transparent about my viewpoints. For both workshops I participated in, I reflected on my experience. Ethical approval was granted on March 16, 2017, by the ethics committee at the University of Edinburgh to attend the workshop 'Rooted in Our Voice' as a participant and researcher. I was again granted ethical approval on September 25th, 2017, by the ethics committee at the University of Edinburgh to attend 'The Naked Voice Adventure' as a participant and researcher.

Considering the dual relationships between my acquaintances and me, I was aware of both disabling and enabling bias of these dual relationships (Gadamer, 2004). Bias is almost always considered negatively impactful to research, preventing and interfering with the generation of genuine knowledge. As a heuristic researcher, I align my perspective with that of Gadamer (2004) who argued that bias cannot be set aside, for it is an inescapable condition of being and knowing. He advises that what we must do is to reflect on our biases and distinguish from enabling to disabling bias. I remained reflexive throughout the interview process, aware of my motivations for asking questions outside the pre-outlined questions. While I maintained strict boundaries around confidentiality, knowing the co-researchers personally was at times an 'enabling bias' (Gadamer, 2004), in that it helped me to understand and empathise with co-researchers' experiences. However, reflexivity plays an important role in the interview process

and throughout the research. Reflexivity brings focus to my self-awareness and induces me to think about my interaction with my co-researchers (Finlay, 2002). To assist me in maintaining an ethical stance during the interview process, I followed the four ethical principles outlined by Beauchamp and Childress (1983, cited in Bricki & Green, 2007). These principles include *autonomy*, which refers to respecting the individuality and entitlements of each person; *beneficence*, which is constituted by ‘doing good’; *non-maleficence*, or refraining from causing harm; and *justice*, which emphasises fairness and equality (Bricki & Green, 2007). I also followed Moustakas’ (1990) further steps for preparing for the interview to ensure the terms of the interview were clear:

1. Develop a set of instructions to inform co-researchers of the nature of the research design, its purpose and process, and what is expected from them.
2. Develop a contract, which will include time commitments, place, confidentiality, informed consent, opportunities for feedback, permission to record, permission to publish and present, and verification of findings.

Documents addressing the first two steps are in Appendix C.

3. Consider ways of creating an atmosphere or climate that will encourage trust, openness, and self-disclosure.

Point three is partially addressed by ensuring confidentiality. Additionally, I attempted to open myself to co-researchers’ experiences and share my own experiences with the intention to collaborate in the process of discovery. As a therapist, I have cultivated my ability to create a space in which clients feel safe to share, and I extended the same warmth and care to co-researchers. I also made sure to stay aware of any power dynamics that might come into play

during the interview and when analysing the data. I aimed to keep close to their narratives and remain tentative about my interpretations.

4. Develop a method for apprising co-researchers of what I believe I am going to accomplish in this investigation and seek their input on ways that I can find evidence of this.

Since I had participated alongside some co-researchers at workshops, I was aware of some of the experiences they had which may illuminate areas to explore further. Participants were given the option to validate my interpretations of their experiences. Sharing my interpretations and receiving feedback makes co-researching an ongoing process in which we collaborate on meanings derived from the experience.

Each interview was about 50 minutes, but some went over as I followed the rhythm and flow of heuristic exploration and search for meaning. Interviews were either done in-person or over Skype. The Skype interviews were conducted under the same precautionary guidelines as the in-person interviews, in that they were conducted in a private area where the confidentiality of the participants would be protected.

Given the importance of the body and the voice in this study, I considered the impact these Skype interviews might have on my interpretation of the co-researchers' stories. Obstacles included the possibility of inaudible segments and an inability to read body language and non-verbal cues. My strategy to mitigate any dropped calls or faulty connection was to ensure a stable internet connection was established before the interview. I also tested the sound quality to guarantee that the recording device was picking up the sound. However, even if the internet connection was established, there was the possibility of issues with hearing people. This is an obvious problem, considering that qualitative interviewers want to capture the participants' experiences 'in their own words' and to show 'how they make sense of the world' (Yilmaz,

2013, p. 313). To address this issue, I asked co-researchers to repeat or slow down until I understood them correctly. I made sure also to request that the co-researchers interview in a quiet room, and I did the same.

Concerning body language, I paid close attention to each person's voice and facial expressions as clues to read emotion. I also had been physically present with each person I interviewed at one point, and I had heard them sing in-person. This gave me a sense of these aspects of the co-researchers, both of which are experienced differently over Skype. The difference I experienced over Skype compared to in-person was not completely inhibiting. However, it did seem to create an emotional barrier and resulted in a loss of intimacy and connection. Despite the limitations of Skype, I was deeply moved by what co-researchers shared, indicating to me that although physically distant, they were able to communicate their experience with me in a way that captured their experience. To further ensure that I did not misunderstand or lose significant aspects of the experiences of those I did the Skype interviews with, I sent them all the verses I wrote, and they approved the accuracy of what I had written. Ethical approval for the interviews was granted by The University of Edinburgh's ethics committee in the School of Health and Social Science on September 22, 2017.



## **Chapter 5: The Collective Composition**

Before I introduce the soloists' verses, I engage my personal voice. Like an intro to a song, I mark the beginning of our collective composition giving a sense of my personal location in the research. The researcher's personal connection to the topic is the foundation from which the process of a heuristic inquiry begins and returns throughout the research process. The 'Intro' illustrates how my life experiences and interests have contributed to my desire and motivation to pursue the study of the human voice's potential for healing and transformation. Following the intro, this chapter presents ten verses that were produced from co-researchers' responses to the questions generated in the conversational interview. The themes that characterise each group are explicated in the choruses. A lyrical poem proceeds each chorus to give an alternative understanding of the key findings of the vocal practice.

Before presenting our collaborative composition, I provide the reader with a programme showing each of the co-researchers' definitions of healing and transformation, our backgrounds, and the main vocal practice discussed in the interview (see Table 5 below). The programme 'sets the stage' for each of the co-researchers and gives context to their stories. I have changed the names of co-researchers to protect their identities. In the 'Outro', my personal voice returns and engages in a 'duet' with my researcher voice, accompanied by a symphony comprised of vocal creativity and Process-Experiential Theory.

The chapter is completed with a song that synthesises the key findings yielded from the analysis. The key findings are presented in the choruses, lyrics poems, and creative synthesis. These choruses were formed by drawing out the main themes from each vocal creativity group. Lyrical poems were then created from the choruses. Audio versions of the lyrical poems and songs are available for listening to give my embodied portrayal of the core qualities and themes

of the phenomenon and to bring life to the lived experiences portrayed through this collective composition. An asterisk (\*) marks the areas where audio versions are meant to accompany the written versions, and a hyperlink is included for access.

### Programme

Co-researcher	Background	Definition of Healing	Definition of Transformation
Sarah (the primary researcher)	American, 29	‘A process of bringing together aspects of one’s self, body-mind-spirit, at deeper levels of inner knowing, leading to balance with each aspect having equal importance and value.’	‘A process of resolving dichotomies within the self, becoming more self-accepting of experience, emotionally fluent, and integrated.’
<b>THERAPEUTIC VOICEWORKERS</b>			
Daniel	Latin, age 35, co-participant in the first workshop	‘[...] the process to restore the body, mind, and soul when they are unbalanced, and this causes illness. It is to bring the person to be normal, well-functioning.’	‘[...] the process in which a person changes his or her beliefs, a way of thinking, habits, way of seeing life, personality, desires, etc. to others that are more in tune with his or her inner being.’
Susan	English, 33, co-participant in the second workshop	‘Recovering parts of ourselves we have split off from.’	‘Experiences that have changed or moved me. I have a new view of the world and what is possible in it.’
Jennifer	English, 32, co-participant in the second workshop	‘Healing is uncovering and recovering from the hurts of the past and unconscious, painful wiring, which affects one’s ability to stay completely present, happy and secure in the moment with oneself and others.’	‘Transformation is shifting into the unfamiliar and welcoming it with one’s whole self so that a new possibility, circumstance or state becomes an absolute reality.’
<b>CREATIVE SINGERS</b>			
Morgan	American, 25, friend of primary researcher	‘A shift or change from one state to another. Emotionally, this could mean shifting from a state of apathy to a state of emotional investment, or a change in the way I think about things.’	‘The reconstruction of parts to form a new, healthier whole, or the deconstruction of barriers that hinder growth and positive functioning of a system. Psychic healing for me has sometimes felt like shedding off layers of someone else’s expectations or vision of who I am in order to find the seed of my true self again.’
Diana	American, 29, friend of	‘A deep feeling of comfort and relief. It is a complex	‘The act of surrendering to change. It is the metamorphosis of our emotions

	primary researcher	process of moving energy that feels stuck or hopeless, and transforming it into freedom and peace.'	or identity from one version to another.'
Phoebe	American, 35	'An experience of intellectual, emotional, or instinctual alignment with our own wholeness.'	'Allowing healing to change one's behaviour.'
<b>PERFORMANCE SINGERS</b>			
Simon	Australian, 30, friend of primary researcher	'Something finite, it has a start and an end. It starts with a problem, either mental, physical or both that needs to be resolved, worked through or fixed.'	'An ongoing, evolving process of change and growth. Some learning has taken place that facilitates a change. You can heal through transformation.'
Nero	American, 30, friend of primary researcher	'Can be both physical and mental and intangible things like ethereal, spirit, and remedying the past. Things that aren't necessarily an object or a person or in your direct interaction.'	'I think something has impeded you or inhibited you and you have to out of necessity or survival or adaptation; you have to undergo that transformation to heal yourself or to fix or remedy those traumas.'
Rex	American, 31, friend of primary researcher	'A process through which one convalesces. Healing may be sought after a traumatic event or to sustain mental/physical health.'	'Transformation is when a change occurs. Transformation affects physical things, such as nature; it can also affect abstractions like ideas and personalities. Transformation is everywhere.'
Gilly	English, 63	'A process to physical and mental health.'	'A major change.'

*Table 5:* Lists the primary researcher and co-researchers' names, nationalities and ages, definitions for healing and transformation, vocal practices discussed and the main vocal practice that framed their verse.

## 5.2: Intro: Embarking on a Vocal Journey into an Embodied Self

I started this research journey with a 'felt sense' that something was healing about the voice that may contribute to the field of counselling and psychotherapy. Gendlin (1978) describes the 'felt sense' as a physical experience, a bodily awareness of a situation, person, or event. For over three years, I followed my bodily sense of something on the 'edge of my awareness' (Gendlin, 1978); a journey I began by exploring my personal experience of vocal creativity. I reflected on my relationship with my voice throughout my life and how vocal practices contributed to my healing and transformation.

I had always been fascinated with singing. As a self-taught singer and performer, I have used my voice in a multitude of ways, the most important of which has been for self-therapy. Singing gave me a way to express what I could not communicate with words and allowed me to deepen my experience of feelings or uplift me in a mood. It helped me transform my understanding of my experiences and navigate my internal spaces to the places where I was most vulnerable, unbalanced, and in need of love and acceptance. In this way, my voice has served as a guide, leading me to a stronger sense of self. But not a single self; rather, a multiplicity of selves, each with their own voice and character. I enjoyed using my voice to explore the different facets of my personality and play with different ways of being and interacting with others.

When I was a child, I constantly sang, unafraid and uninhibited in sound. As I grew up, the harsh environment in which I lived led to a sense of inward collapse, which manifested in blocks to my creativity and freedom in sound. The shame resulting from my experiences affected my speaking and singing voice. I was quieter and less playful with my vocalisations. When singing, I shied away from high notes that felt too exposing. I gave up on my long-held dream to become a famous singer. I went to talking therapy to address my wounds and eventually decided to become a talking therapist to help others who suffer from mental health issues.

When I was thinking about what to study for my doctoral dissertation, I knew from my own experiences of creative singing and performance singing that the voice could be therapeutic, and I wanted to explore this interest. This eventually led me to investigate research surrounding the voice, participate in voicework workshops, and explore experiences of vocal practices. This dissertation is the result of an arduous journey in which I explored more than my research question by confronting myself through heuristic inquiry. Through this encounter, I developed my ‘voices’ or roles, including my researcher voice, my counsellor voice and other voices that

configure my personal voice. I engaged these voices throughout the challenging process of this doctoral journey as guides for understanding myself, the experiences of my co-researchers, and the healing and transformational potential of the human voice.

Our vocal stories combine with songs and lyrical poems in a dance between the logical mind and the felt body for dynamic and alternative understandings of experiences of healing and transformation through vocal creativity. I now invite the reader to join us in our life journeys of song. With the wind of creativity supporting us, together we fly like a flock of birds toward a shared direction of knowing something about the therapeutic potential of the human voice.

### **5.3: Therapeutic Voicework**

In this section, I present the vocal stories of Daniel, Susan, and Jennifer who spoke of their experiences of therapeutic voicework as a healing and transformational influence in their lives. I met Daniel at the first workshop, and Susan and Jennifer at the second. I conducted Daniel's and Susan's interviews in-person, while Jennifer's was done over Skype. Together, they tell a story of the significance of exploring and expressing the self through the voice with the help of the workshop facilitator and group members.

#### **Daniel: Connecting Beyond Words**

Growing up, I didn't think of myself as a singer, but I liked singing songs a lot. That's why when I saw an ad for group singing therapy, I thought, 'I like singing, so why not?' At that time, I wanted to explore new things, and singing therapy seemed like a more natural way to heal for me.

I went to the workshop and what I liked about it was that there was no agenda. The facilitator invited us to notice our voice, express our voice, and see what happens. That's it. I

liked that she left it open for us to explore in the way we needed to, but with the help of her exercises. I was free to enjoy my voice and learn things about myself through what I noticed when I was singing.

One exercise I remember well because it changed me. The exercise involved singing each of the vowel sounds and seeing what the experience was like to sing each one. When I sang the 'ah' sound, I noticed I could not sing it for longer than a few seconds. I thought I had a problem since I could sing the other sounds well. I asked the teacher about this, and she said each note is related to a part of the body and the 'ah' sound was in the heart area. She said it was not something wrong with my voice — it was mental. It was like something in my brain said, 'I can't do this.' It was as if it was impossible or too difficult. I felt like this voice in my brain was blocking me and I was afraid to make this sound.

But there is also something in me that is very persistent. When I feel fear, I know I need to go there, so with the safety and encouragement of the facilitator, I kept practising this note. Eventually, I was able to produce the feared 'ah' sound. Not only did I produce the sound, but it became deeply powerful, and everyone in the group took notice. The power behind the sound seemed to reflect my confidence that grew from facing my fear and working through it to produce the note. It sounds so simple, but this moment was profound for me.

Singing has helped me to express myself in sound when I could not express in words. I've struggled with a stutter my whole life and singing has helped me to address the mental blocks responsible for my difficulties speaking. Singing allowed me to communicate myself freely and express what I could not voice with words.

I remember I had a problem with my family, and this problem was very difficult for me because I had always gotten along with my family up until that point. I remember after one

argument, I went to the singing therapy and I was feeling so bad. The singing class was amazing because I was able to release my anger, which I couldn't do with my parents. Even though I had friends to turn to about this issue, and it helped to talk to them, being able to express my feelings without words really helped me to get in touch with my emotional experience and let it out.

This communication through sound has made me feel a connection with others that feels different from speaking. Society gives you a protocol for how to greet, communicate and connect with other people but singing allows a different type of connection. Communicating through sound feels like it's beyond the mind, and that's what I enjoy the most. When you sing with other people, you forget yourself, and you can play and co-create something. Singing with people gives me a sense of oneness with people. I have not found another way that connects me so immediately with other people.

These experiences were so important to me that I went to this singing therapy group for about two years and even started to facilitate some groups myself. My experiences at these workshops cultivated in me a deep appreciation for the voice. I see now that my voice, or the voice, in general, is a very important part of identity. I believe it is so much an extension of you; your body and your mind. That is why I think I had those blocks there because your voice doesn't lie.

I think that's why singing is so scary for people because it's like being naked. To sing with others, you are showing so much. So, people think they cannot sing because they judge it as good or bad. I think singing therapy can help liberate you from these thoughts. When we let go of judgements and allow ourselves to be vulnerable, we see that everyone has a singing voice and it is as natural to sing as it is to speak. It's not about making a beautiful song; it's just about you bringing yourself into your voice.

I believe that we all must use our voice and our creativity. Our voices and what we can create with them are exclusive to human beings. Each voice is unique, a window into our identity, which is why I think it is important for everyone to develop their voice; otherwise, we lack something in what it means to be a human being. There is no one else with your voice, and the universe needs to hear yours.

### **Susan: Beyond Reclaiming the Joyful Self**

Singing has seemed to allow me to come back to parts of me that were repressed because of the environments I was in. I liked singing when I was a child. It made me feel joyful and lively, but my parents did not want me or my siblings to sing. They disapproved of expressing emotion, so I learned to sing quietly on my own, often a mere hum.

In primary school, my relationship with my voice was such that I didn't speak much at all. The school I attended was large and diverse, and for me, this felt uncomfortable. I was quite shy and quiet in those days. It wasn't until secondary school—a school that was all girls and much smaller—that I felt safe enough to express myself. In fact, the new school made such a difference that I joined the debate team and did a lot of public speaking. It was a dramatic change for me. I still didn't sing too much in those days, but it was the beginning of me starting to use my voice to express myself openly with people.

In college, I studied in a field that didn't acknowledge the emotional part of people at all. It was a stressful, competitive environment. I noticed how I reverted to being more silent about who I was personally, such as my interests and values. Those didn't quite match up with the field I was in. I did my work and was relieved when I finished. In the end, it wasn't the right place for me.



After college and out of the parents' house, I was free to explore parts of myself which I hadn't been very in touch with. I went to therapy and found that the approach that was most effective for me integrated the body into sessions, so it wasn't just about talking. For me, talking wasn't enough. I can see how people can get stuck in their narrative easily when they don't have other ways of gaining insight about what's going on for them.

I also started to be curious about singing and went to a couple of workshops that were facilitated by a friend of mine. Therapy and these workshops helped me to open up to these kinds of environments which I view as kind of 'hippy'. I tend to be a bit sceptical about workshops such as these, and I suppose that comes from my dad and his criticism of things that don't match his worldview. He's always been quite perfectionistic and critical, so that comes out in me sometimes.

I noticed how I could be critical when I was in the workshop. At first, I was enjoying myself and getting a lot out of it. I had the feeling like I'd fallen in love. I had a hard time sleeping because I was excited about what was happening. But it was also challenging because I am quite reserved, and some activities were uncomfortable for me. I noticed my inner critic came up and said things like, 'Oh that didn't sound very nice.' Fortunately, I had already done some work around my inner critic, so it didn't disrupt my engagement with the workshop too much. One day, I almost didn't attend because I wasn't in the best mood and it made me feel critical of the whole thing. But I pushed myself to go anyway.

I experienced other benefits from the workshop that made me glad that I stuck it out. The moment that stands out to me the most was when Chloe invited me to sing my longing. When she asked me to sing my longing, it was funny because it felt a bit beyond feeling and emotions. In general, I am quite connected to my emotions and how I feel inside my body, and at that

moment, it felt like I was also connected to something much, much bigger, like the whole—the whole universe sounds a bit big—but it did feel like this kind of, just this kind of presence or a kind of openness, something much, much bigger than just my little body. And in my body, it felt like a kind of an openness and an expansion. Like one energy, rather than two separate energies meeting. I suppose it's hard to find the words exactly.

I was aware I was in my body, but my body felt so open and connected to everything else, it was like it wasn't separate. Like this real openness and freeness. So, at that point, it didn't really feel much in the way of emotion because emotions to me feel much more solid and maybe there's tension somewhere or I know that I am sad. Feelings feel more visceral or solid, and they're located in one area of my body, whereas this felt like my whole body was just open and part of everything. It felt like a spiritual moment. As for the triads, I felt like I was singing from a more emotional part of myself that was just me.

Being heard by the group and responded to in the triads was important to me. It's hard to say how these experiences have led to healing and transformation because it's been more like a subtle, gradual process of challenging myself to open up to new experiences. With the confidence that came from me doing that, I've been able to allow others into my world. I feel like I have been able to get in touch with feelings like joy and parts of myself that I've needed to hide for a long time.

I remember when I went to my brother's graduation and a speaker was there who said that singing was a basic, human need. That made me tearful because a part of me knew what he said was true. I suppose what's been healing is that I am now letting more parts of myself out and expressing myself in ways I felt unable to before.

## **Jennifer: Trusting the Voice**

When I was a child, I sang to self-soothe when amid difficult feelings. Singing to soothe myself came naturally and I wouldn't say I did it consciously. Singing was an informal practice in the beginning. I would also sing other artists' songs to generate uplifting feelings.

I remember when I didn't have a car, and I needed to walk home, I would feel really unsafe and fearful like I was in danger, so I would sing to myself. Singing would banish those thoughts and give me something to concentrate on. Connecting with the words and the songs helped as well. It gave me something pleasant to listen to and conjured nice memories. There was a sense of safety when singing in this way.

A few years ago, I got into the art of singing and producing music, which led me to a harmonic singing group. Although no one was really a singer in the group, we created this fantastic rapport, and we felt very authentic with each other afterwards. There was a lot of joy and playfulness in the group. I think that came from singing in direct harmony with our voices. I had a similar experience in a choir a few years before. There was this real feeling of being able to relax around each other socially, having sung that way together.

Also, in these group sessions, I learned breathing techniques and sustaining notes, and I noticed a very physical effect afterwards. A real feeling of cleansing and peace and joy and contentment afterwards. Especially after a few hours of singing that way in a group. There would be a relaxed feeling, muscles, and tendons relaxed and a kind of lightness, and perhaps a sporty sort of feeling, like a work-out had been done, which probably had been done, considering all the breathing we'd done through singing. I would feel a strong sense of presence like I would as a child; a feeling of being all there in the room.

Having been to a few singing workshops now, I noticed that they give me the benefit of being able to express feelings and you share that moment with other people. There's no judgement on your voice; there's no exposure. Everyone is so busy listening to their own voice that they don't listen to you at all. Singing with others this way feels therapeutic but singing on my own feels very different.

Even in times where I was using singing to self-soothe, I would always be very aware that I didn't want anyone to hear me and I would immediately stop, or I would develop a way of dealing with that and sing anyway. There was always that awareness that I didn't want people to hear me singing on my own. Even when I eventually started performing for others and to large audiences, I struggled to feel confident about my voice.

I remember two or three times I did open mics as a kind of test of courage. I was thinking that I had been singing a song for so long and it was tidy enough. I thought, 'I like to listen to it, so I can surely share this.' And it being an open mic space, it's much more about self-expression, and so I sang, and I kind of became lost in singing. I was still not super confident in my voice, and the audience could sense that, and I could see them starting to straggle out and wander around. I felt like I lost a little bit of a connection with the audience who maybe were expecting a full-blown performance and I was still finding my feet.

I don't regret it even though it felt quite dreadful that I lost connection with the audience. I also felt uplifted because I was doing something artistic. Nevertheless, it was challenging, as I thought I'd given them something slightly poorer than what they really wanted to listen to and you know the audience, in a sense, never lie. You can see when they are engaged. You can see when they are gripped, and you can see when they are restless, and you can see when they

dissipate. It was very clear, so it was a good measure of how much more work I needed to do on my voice to present it.

Singing other people's songs usually makes me feel as if I am falling short and that what I am doing is not good enough. I would try to emulate what the other singers were doing, and I felt like I could not reach the emotional catharsis they could because my voice was not developed enough. But singing with them did help me connect to my emotions and to feel better sometimes. It's complicated because it's therapeutic for me while it also has the effect of making me feel inadequate.

It's not just when singing other people's songs that I struggle to feel confident with my voice. I feel that way about singing my own songs, too. When I was recording my album, I thought I better have someone else sing my songs because my voice wasn't strong enough. Luckily, the producer I was working with helped me to embrace my voice by teaching me about what it takes to produce songs and that what we hear on recordings takes so much to make. Knowing that others must work hard to make songs sound great helped me to be less judgemental of my own abilities.

When I sing with people, and I don't feel judged by them, this is when healing and transformation happen for me. I remember after one show I did, in which I was singing what I felt were really sad songs, someone from the audience came up to me and said that what I sang made them feel peaceful and happy. With their encouragement, I learned to trust my voice more. After the workshop, I noticed something similar. That I am increasingly valuing my voice and I am feeling more confident. This came from people hearing and accepting whatever I sang in whatever way I needed to sing it. I think my struggles with singing had something to do with me not committing to a practice with my voice and now I feel like I am ready to dedicate myself to

developing it and being around audiences who value my voice as I am beginning to value it. Feeling more open, it's like I can share more artistic expressions and tensions with others. With myself, I am now focusing on what I can work on and not always singing my songs in a particular way, as I am embracing being open and letting my voice sing the song in a new way and bringing myself more into what I am singing.

### **The Chorus of the Therapeutic Voiceworkers**

Lyrical Poem: Vocal Connection in Circular Formation \*

Audio file: [https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/Therapeutic+Voiceworkers/1\\_4cv08fbm](https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/Therapeutic+Voiceworkers/1_4cv08fbm)

We form a circle  
Our wings expand  
The wind beneath us  
Hand in hand  
You hear my call  
Our feelings direct  
We self-transcend  
And deeply connect  
I free my voice  
Explore with sound  
Emotions within  
& beyond Earth-bound  
If I should fall,  
From storms come  
You'll swoop down  
Reunite us as one  
You hear my pain  
You hear my joy  
My personal song  
Our one voice

The experience of voicework for these three co-researchers began with their active engagement with their bodies and their emotions, as they expressed themselves through sound in voicework workshops. Through their embodied self-exploration and self-expression, the co-researchers encountered challenges in their own ways. These challenges, or 'mental blocks' as

Daniel referred to them, were said to come from society, family members, and their own fear of judgement, which limited their vocal expressions. With others' encouragement and acceptance, they were able to take risks to express what they had been unable to say in words or allow into full awareness.

Their ability to express themselves through sound and song led to their unique experiences of healing and transformation. Since Daniel had grown up with a stutter and struggled to verbalise his experience, singing gave him an outlet to release his emotions and show himself he can express how he feels effectively. Singing enabled, Susan—whose emotional expression had been limited by her external environment—to develop openness and emotional fluency. In the practice of voicework, Jennifer found vocal freedom beyond others' style of singing, and this helped her to value her unique voice. As a result of the support of group members on the path to vocal freedom, these three individuals reported feeling more open, confident, and liberated.

The power of singing with others was an important aspect of these co-researchers' experiences of voicework. The resonant connection with other workshop attendees through sound was described as a feeling of at-oneness, empathy and profound presence, in which deep bonds were formed, as they moved away from their sense of self and towards a fundamental sense of communion with other people. This was considered one of the most healing aspects of the experience for this group. For Susan, she said that from her experience of voicework, she felt like her 'soul had been met' when the group received her improvisational expressions. Daniel said singing with others is like you can 'touch the other with vibration. But with this vibration, you can play and have communication on a different level and get to know each other through sound.' After the workshop, Jennifer said, 'I realised how much pleasure I got from that

vulnerability in front of that group and being so exposed and for them to really feel it and enjoy it. It was so cathartic.'

The experience of voicework within a group seemed to act as a safe container in which these co-researchers could freely express their feelings and emotions with their voices, connect deeply with themselves, and discover inner nuances of their bodies and minds. In so doing, they gained a sense of freedom and strength in themselves to be seen and heard more fully.

#### **5.4: The Creative Singers**

This section presents the vocal stories of Morgan, Diana, and Phoebe. Morgan and Diana are friends and acquaintances of mine. Phoebe is a voicework practitioner whose work I became aware of during my literature review. All the interviews were conducted through Skype. Their verbal music speaks of the trials and tribulations of creating and discovering the self beyond external influences, and their sense of empowerment from following the voices within.

##### **Morgan: Singing from the Nucleus**

Singing and expressing myself musically was something I've always done. My voice has always been an important way for me to express myself both musically and through speech. I also play guitar, and I notice that the better I get at playing guitar, the easier it is to express myself through it. But what I feel that language and the guitar can't get to like singing can, is the emotional, embodied portrayal of what I want to communicate. My voice comes straight from my body, and because of that, it feels like the most direct way to express my inner world. When I sing, I can communicate more, and I can also express things that I didn't expect to share.

There seems to be a connection between my subconscious and my singing voice that comes out when I am writing and singing improvisationally. I can find out how I feel about



things in unexpected ways. Sometimes I am really surprised by what comes out when I am singing and writing songs. I feel I can get in contact with the darker parts of human nature, whether these darker parts are in me or I am connecting with something collective, it's hard to tell. It's confusing because I had a safe, happy childhood with a lot of support, and yet, when I am writing, sometimes I will notice strange, dark feelings come up. This makes me feel like I am possessed like I am an energetic vessel for something. I am intrigued by this, and I tend to explore these thoughts and feelings with curiosity.

However, it can be kind of alarming to think that some of the things I feel come from me. The way I can describe it is that it's like a spiritual and ancestral experience through which I am connecting with something deep within me and around me that seems beyond space and time. Although there is a part of me that feels like I am connecting with something beyond myself, my scientific and logical self is quite sceptical of esoteric ways of thinking, so I am unsure whether I am getting in touch with the darker parts of me that I don't feel I can express outside of a song, connecting with something else, or both.

What I do know is that I have a 'me' that is influenced and shaped by the larger social and cultural norms which I will say are like 'atoms' surrounding me, and when I write from the part of me that wants to appeal to those atoms and slot into those norms, I'm unable to write anything meaningful. But if I write from what I think of as the 'nucleus' in me, my central powerhouse, I tend to be able to connect with a more authentic and honest frequency and escape those social and cultural influences.

I find that it's easy for me to get stuck and not produce anything of any real meaning when I am writing from that place that's concerned about what other people want me to play or sound like. Sometimes writing and performing can be stressful because of this. A part of me is

afraid of judgement. That people won't like what I am doing. Anticipating shows and performing in them can be challenging when I am self-conscious. These fears aren't from any experiences I have had; yet they are still powerful. I feel pressure to make something that others like and to please the audience, but my creative process doesn't really work when I am concerned about other peoples' opinions.

In order to make songs that I can connect with honestly and meaningfully, I need solitude. A place that is contained, a bit cluttered, and quiet. This allows me to connect with my 'nucleus' which feels honest and true to my feelings and experiences and helps me to write songs that matter to me and that make an impression on the audience.

I remember a song I wrote about a break up that turned out to be one of my most favoured songs. I was left with a lot of things I wanted to say to this person and writing a song about it helped me to process and understand those underlying feelings. I think people could sense how true the emotion was when I sang this song and that's why it's one of the most popular ones. I think having that time alone away from everything enabled that creative, healing process to happen.

However, there was one person who I felt I could write songs around. Part of it was circumstantial: we were young, and I was not as self-conscious yet. But it was also how nurturing she was and how she didn't demand much of our friendship. We were able to be alone together, and the comfort and safety I felt made it possible for me to write without reservation. I notice when I don't practice, I get anxious. There's restless energy in me that tends to spill out into other areas of my life. It's like I get clogged up, and I have this spiritual itchiness I need to scratch. I project these feelings out on work or my relationship when all I really need to do is take the time to sing and write.

When I am singing and writing frequently, it's like I am flexing this inner muscle that connects with my truth and what really matters to me. This is what has been transformational about singing and songwriting: when I am consistently connected with myself through my creative process, I am better able to discern what I do and don't want, and what I find meaningful and what I'd rather let go of. I am better able to act on what I learn in a way that supports my growth. This is why I have made a vow to myself to keep up singing and songwriting. A promise to myself that I will value my inner guide and do the work necessary to have the confidence to go out into the world and share myself with others and to do the things that matter most to me.

### **Diana: Empowered by Sound**

As a child, I was pretty quiet and observant. I still am, but more so when I was younger. I consider myself a sensitive person, tending to absorb my environment and the feelings of others. I feel that my quietness resulted from that – from not yet knowing how to soothe the amount of pain I felt around me. That was until I realised singing was an outlet for all of what I felt.

Singing and writing songs has been a way for me to put words to the things I feel even if they don't belong to me. I think most of my songs aren't of me. They're things I've heard or felt from other people that somehow end up in my music. When I write songs, I am informed by the feelings within me. I locate the feeling in my body, and my voice translates the tone of the emotion with words. Being able to voice what's inside gives me a sense of release, like an inner cleansing. I notice when I don't sing, I feel like I am going to explode, so it's always been important for me to sing.

I sing my own songs, and I also sing other peoples' songs. I hum, and I tone, all of which are forms of self-therapy. Singing in the car, in the shower, or in my private room are the spaces that are the most therapeutic. In these spaces, I feel free to play in a child-like way with my

voice. When I am singing freely in this way, it feels like my heart lifts. It's like somehow in the breath I take when I sing, it is like this whole chest area is just, like, up. I feel elevated. In singing and sound vibration, if I feel emotions stuck in me, some heart pain or even just overthinking a situation, going back to music helps me ground in my body. I can figure out where the feeling is, and by singing, somehow it gets unblocked and released. I do think that expressing ourselves is key to healing.

I go through similar processes with my clients. They start by talking to me about a problem they have or a feeling. Because I have done a lot of work with intuition and tapping into other people's feelings, I can locate and sense their feelings in my own body. I can feel the pain that is here or there or wherever. When I do the sound healing portion of the session, I get to that part of the body, and I use my intuition to feel a tone or a note in their body that's missing or that is needed to soothe it. So that's my relationship with my voice now. It's become a way of healing myself and my clients.

But it was not always this way with my voice. There were times when I didn't feel like I could express myself the way I needed. I went through a pretty horrible break-up probably, like, seven years ago with a guy with whom I tended to swallow my emotions to fit in his cage. After we broke up, I went through a pretty deep depression, and I returned to my music and started writing. Those songs are some of the best songs I have ever written because they were true. They were true to anybody who experiences that kind of heartache.

One of the great things about using the voice is having a place for those emotions to go. When you're singing in public, the song can also change the vibration of the room, and this affects the people that are there. Seeing that change happen or just like a smile or someone

dancing, that is something powerful. Also, it's a relief being heard. On the other side, being listened to is scary because it feels incredibly vulnerable.

There is a fear of being judged and a worry about whether people will like what comes out of my mouth. There are days when the self-judgement or fear of being judged is really strong, and I feel powerless against it. Many times, I don't even want to get out of bed; I feel so paralysed by feelings of judgement or sadness or anger or frustration. This judgement is stagnating and is like poison to my creativity.

But when I come back to my voice, surrendering to the creative thread instead of trying to make it what other people want, I feel incredibly empowered and protected by my voice; like nothing can mess with me. Singing those songs after that period of silence was an expression of me valuing those parts that had been repressed during that relationship. It was like a personal revolution, and a reclaiming of my personal power and my right to be fully me.

I guess healing occurs when I am okay with what my body is doing and what my voice is doing and not caring about what's coming or what's gone. Because even in those moments, if you're grieving or you're sad, at least you're looking at it, at least you're paying attention to it. That's what I now do for my clients. With each person that comes to me to heal, I am also trusting my own voice's power to make a change. I believe in the importance of believing in the power of our voices.

When your voice echoes out into the world and out into the cosmos, that never goes away, that stays, that energy continues. Like Newton's Law, every action has a reaction, so by using our voices and creativity our own voice is a lineage in itself—it holds experience. It holds our health experience, it holds our emotional experiences, and I think it's so important to create our own lineages because the structures that we dwell in are so strong and imprisoning that if we

decide to stay in those structures, we will perpetuate that bondage. When we find our own voice and know that voice is important enough to share with others, it creates a ripple effect that is much larger than us.

### **Phoebe: In the Voice, Revealed**

The story of my voice begins with my relationship with my family. I grew up in a religious and conservative home where there were implicit and explicit rules for how to be in the world. I disagreed with my family about many things and was quite outspoken, which on the surface seemed like I was voicing my truth, and in a way, I was, but also, this tough exterior was a defence that kept me from being vulnerable. It was a means whereby I could self-protect against the expectations, beliefs, and rules that did not align with my own values. However, I held onto my own values just as strongly as my family held onto their values. So, my relationship with my family felt like we were pushing against each other and, at the same time, I craved their love and acceptance.

My mother always says she lives her life beyond reproach so she never says or does anything that anyone could judge her for. With me, she applied the same rules she had for herself. Despite how well-intentioned she was, her praise was specific to those behaviours she thought were appropriate, and so I felt like I had to be how she wanted me to be to get her attention and approval.

Similarly, my dad also had his way of a 'right' or 'wrong' way of being, especially when it came to singing. He tended to focus on the technicality of singing, and he was quite pushy about getting things 'right' and singing in general. This made it hard for me to sing with him, even though singing with my dad was the only time where I was relating to him intimately and effortlessly. Eventually, I gave up on these moments of relational elation even though they were

important to me because I didn't like how he was pushy. When my sister started singing with him instead of me, I got jealous, so I practised his songs and learned all the harmonies in preparation for singing with my dad again.

When we finally performed together, I was so proud of what I had done. I was able to sing it, I wasn't afraid, I hit all the notes, and it felt so wonderful. Then I was all smiles, and he turned to me, and he said, 'Wow, Phoebe, you would be really good if you took lessons.' In his mind, he was complimenting me, unknowing I had just taken nine months of singing lessons. I felt incredibly rejected.

My relationship with my voice reflected my relationship with my family. I had terrible stage fright despite taking part in countless performances throughout many years. I would 'white knuckle' my way through performances. I sang in stifling, controlling ways in order not to make mistakes. I also sang that way in order not to be great at singing. I couldn't be 'bad', but I also couldn't let myself be great. My mother wanted me to be a good little girl but not better than her, not more successful or happier than she was.

It was only when I was singing in a service or in a devotional way, such as in a church choir or a hospice, that singing was easy. In those settings, I could lose a sense of myself in the service of others, even though I felt very connected to myself when singing for them. Outside of these devotional contexts, I had experienced so many profound moments where my voice was rejected, that I was afraid to be fully seen. But these experiences also made me tough, and I continued to do what I love and what felt right to me.

I ended up doing training in an art ecotherapy program where I learned a lot of applied ecopsychology. I think what this programme really did for me was to trust myself and opened my mind to have a different relationship with my voice. I trusted the power of the voice to heal.

Singing had allowed me to bypass ideas about my experience and myself that are untrue. It enabled me to be myself subversively. Because I felt like my home, my culture, and my religion were quite oppressive and silencing and considering that my needs and desires are sinful and that I needed to hide them, singing was a way that I had to be myself. The tool that I had to escape all those rules. I realised singing is a birthright and began to search for ways to allow myself that experience without all the pressure and control I'd put on it, and I discovered voicework exercises that allowed me to practice being bad and effectively become comfortable with my shadow self.

Only now am I using voicework to begin to allow myself to be in my genius, to use singing as a tool to channel my grace, brilliance, and creativity. That's what I'm working on now. Can I be comfortable being seen as great? Can I take up space as talented? How good can I allow myself to sound without feeling like I'm being a diva or stealing the spotlight or showing off? Can I be someone who embraces both failure and success?

Now that I am teaching workshops, I continue to heal through voicework. I notice a lot of mucus expels from my body and what this means to me is that the trauma is leaving my body. And the way I know that I have healed is because my sense of worth is not externalised anymore. I am not afraid of being seen. I am okay being bad. I am okay being perceived as bad. I have full confidence that I am a good singer. That I have a nice voice that I communicate love and healing through my voice. And that is part of why I am here. I believe that my right to sing has nothing to do with how good my voice is and thus that my right to exist has nothing to do with how well behaved or well liked I am.

It's worth noting that I am also a painter and a published writer, so I have many outlets to express myself. But it's easier to hide in a painting. Singing is so revealing; you can't edit it. And



so, I think it's much more challenging. It's the fire. My voice gives me the most immediate feedback. I believe it's your blueprint, your vibration, in this present moment, and all the time. When I sing now, I strengthen my capacity to claim all that I am and to stand without apologies in front of others. My life's purpose has become about helping women to embrace radical self-acceptance and self-love through the complexities of their voices. So, my voice no longer reflects my need to control the way the world perceives me; rather it demonstrates my willingness to accept all sides of myself and express my truth without inhibition.

### **The Chorus of the Creative Singers**

Lyrical Poem: Out of the Cage \*

Audio file: [https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/Creative+Singers/1\\_1geh3jxp](https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/Creative+Singers/1_1geh3jxp)

Sealed in a cage  
I am bound  
Wings weak  
In need of sound  
For sound knows not  
About restriction  
constructed by standards  
and opinion  
    I sing of freedom  
        To reach beyond  
            Unrestrained  
                Power in song  
                    Sound penetrates  
                        Expands the cage frame  
                            I break free  
                                Spread my wings again  
                                    The wind supports me  
  And guides me through  
  Toward new horizons  
  Of inner truth

In the experience of creative singing, Morgan, Diana, and Phoebe claim their personal power by connecting with their voices and their bodies. Their stories tell of how they struggled with external forces resulting in perfectionism, feeling overwhelmed, and confusion. They spoke

of how creative use of their voices assisted them in subverting that which threatened to limit the course of their lives and their creativity.

Morgan discussed her fear of judgement, which affected her ability to write songs that felt authentic. Diana conveyed her sense of overwhelm from absorbing the pain around her, the struggle to live within the ‘cage’ a romantic partner provided for her, and the resulting silence. Phoebe described the pressure she felt to be perfect and the manifestation of this ‘condition of worth’ (Rogers, 1959) as it presented in the harsh control of her voice. The way forward relied on refusing to shape their self-expressions in particular ways to please others and instead placing trust in voices within to guide them toward a personal sense of direction.

Each had their own creative process that led to a felt illumination of the path to greater self-agency. Morgan knew that she required certain conditions, such as a quiet space or a nurturing friend to connect deeply with herself and write songs that were meaningful to her. These contexts allowed her to dialogue with herself through music and grasp a sense of her true feelings. In turn, this practice enhanced her sense of direction and trust within herself.

Diana similarly needed a quiet space where she could get in touch with herself to create. She said that it was when she ‘surrendered’ to her creative ‘thread’ and accepted whatever came from her body and her voice, that she was free from her inner judge. Through continued practice, she reclaimed a sense of personal power, a power that inspired her to heal others through sound in spiritual communion.

As for Phoebe, she was encouraged by teachers and her partner to embrace her voice. She also engaged in an ecotherapy training which led her to a strong sense of trust in the voice for healing. She created her own vocal approach to address her personal struggles with perfection

and now empowers other women to allow themselves to be fully seen and heard through voicework.

Following the wisdom of the body through the voice, the creative singers experienced an inner awakening of power and freedom. Each formed their own practice for standing up to their introjected inner critic, as they connected with their bodily wisdom through the voice. As a result, they developed greater self-acceptance for even the darker parts of themselves and others' shadows and established a profound trust in their abilities to continue to accept and express themselves through their creative endeavours.

### **5.5: The Performance Singers**

Simon, Rex, Nero, and Gilly each present their vocal stories as singers and performers. These co-researchers were friends or acquaintances of mine. Indeed, I sang and wrote songs with Nero and Rex, and yet, through speaking with them and the others in our interview, I learned so much I didn't know about the meaning their voice has for them. Simon's and Gilly's interviews took place in-person. Nero's and Rex's were conducted on Skype. Together, they speak of the voice as a way to intimately connect with themselves and others and transform their feelings and experiences through song.

#### **Simon: Voices of the 'Theatrepist'**

Silence had often accompanied those times in my life when I had ideas stirring in my head. A time of processing, almost a cocoon-like state. I can be thinking for ages, churning something over and over in my mind, but it's not until I say it aloud that I can set it in stone and make tangible what I have been attempting to understand. The process of putting into words what I am experiencing helps me to get a grip on the experience so I can look at it and know

what to do with it. Expressing myself, either through speaking or singing has facilitated this process of understanding and learning.

Expressing myself was challenging in some ways growing up. I was raised in a Catholic household, so we couldn't swear. I am also a gay man. But I didn't always know that. It was not until I was in my late teens that I began to make sense of my feelings, so this part of me was hidden and silent until I moved away from home when I was twenty. Being away from home, I was able to 'come out' to my friends and family and tell them I'm gay. This was one way I used my voice to proclaim my growing sense of who I was becoming.

The process of 'coming out' was difficult, as it is for most people who don't know whether others will accept knowing this new information about you. That's why I had to come out to myself first and really accept I'm gay. I had to start over in a lot of ways. In a new environment, I was able to explore and integrate new facets of me that I was discovering. Yet, at my core, I still wanted the traditional package of a family and the white picket fence, and I had to re-vision that life with a man instead of a woman. While I had to, in a sense, start over, I was able to find a way to piece myself together again and keep intact those other parts of me that were familiar.

My first relationship with a man was intense. In that relationship, I was expressing some of the new parts of me, but other parts were silenced. I felt repressed in the relationship, unable to do what I felt called to do creatively because I didn't feel that he believed in me. When I left him, I felt able to create something with these unexpressed ideas. I created a comedy show with music that brought together life transitions, going through my experiences of being a child, travelling, and the trials and tribulations of romantic relationships. It became a show of different characters, which at first were inspired by silly voices I used to do with friends to entertain them.

It wasn't until later that I realised that those characters were different aspects of me or based on important people in my life.

Through these characters and these voices, I was able to explore the complexity of myself and try different ways of being. The show was called 'Voices on My Head' so it was quite literally a depiction of the different parts of my personality, each having their own unique voice. Without those voices, I don't think I would have known how to express myself. As this show went on, I've noticed how the characters have evolved and become more genuine. I connect more with them in an authentic way, which is freeing but scary at the same time. It is exposing who I am to an audience, and there is the fear that they will dislike it. But I have seen how bringing myself more into these characters is felt by the audience and draws them in much more, and that encourages me to be more vulnerable.

This genuine connection with the audience is the reason why I perform, which is also why it can be awful when people don't connect with the show. In these shows, the audience is invited to share in an experience that is personal and human, and in so doing, I hope that they can learn something they can use for their own growth. Shows are, in this way, symbiotic – I grow through the process of self-discovery that comes from creating and performing, and they may be inspired to grow through engaging with my show. I'd like to think of myself as a sort of theatre therapist, or a 'theatreapist'. It is rewarding when I know people go away from the show having seen something in a new way or understood something better.

Coming back to what I love about performing, it helped me to find out what really matters to me and to navigate life transitions and hardships. I had put on an incredibly stressful show. There was a lot of marketing involved, and it became more about selling tickets than about

creating and rehearsing. The whole experience made me question whether I ever wanted to do theatre again.

Usually, I can use singing to get into my feelings during difficult times. If I am going through a break-up, I love break-up songs. When I am happy, I like happy songs. I need to really feel what I am feeling to move on and singing songs helps me to do that. Since I don't write my own songs, I sing other people's songs that fit how I am feeling, and through the emotional catharsis of singing, this helps me to process what I am going through.

But after this show, I didn't cope this way. Instead, I went through another period of silence, mulling over what direction to take my life. Would I commit myself fully to becoming a performer and give up my dream of a family? Or would I give up theatre all together? These questions played on in my mind until I went on a camping trip with some friends. Given a change of environment, I began to work through these questions. What really made my direction clear was when I started story-telling for my friends. I had them so gripped by my story, that the connection I had with them reminded me what performing was all about for me. I realised that I could have that connection without being famous. I could have a family and keep creating and expressing. Breaking that silence, I got in touch with the voices that are like a compass to a more complete version of myself.

My voice once again made tangible what had previously been unclear. Once I was able to get that feeling of connection again, I was in my creative, happy place where I know what I really want. The voice was my instrument and the catalyst for change, helping me to take a third way out of my 'either/or' thinking, shed the false dreams of yesterday and transform me into a new way of being with myself and others, as a more healed, integrated whole.

## **Nero: Befriending the Music Within**

When I was a kid, my mom encouraged me to sing, and it was a special way we bonded with each other. When singing, I remember feeling carefree, and I was calmed and soothed. Getting that support as a child all the time made me feel confident in my abilities and developed in me a deep affection for music. But, as I got older, people started to express their opinions about what I was doing musically, and their responses changed my relationship with singing and music.

I felt wounded by others' feedback, so I started to use singing as a tool rather than something I did for creative self-expression. As a teenager, music was a means to an end — a way to gain social acceptance through entertainment. I started to study the technical aspect of music, learning guitar and piano to accompany me in my endeavour to bring joy to others. I was no longer the songbird I once was; I was more of an engineer.

I needed alcohol to give me the courage to relax enough to enjoy performing, as it became increasingly difficult for me to muster the courage to sing and to experience satisfaction with what I created. This made my experience of singing a Catch-22: I would come away feeling disappointed with myself, and at the same time I needed music to cope with my feelings. I used music as a form of emotional maintenance and turned to music as if it were a friend I could always rely on.

In times of feeling overwhelmed and panicked, I would go to the piano and sing to get out my feelings and feel better. I let go of all of what I feel singing and playing the piano, and this allows me to release the tension I am feeling and calm down. Having music to focus on helps me to get out of my head, and I can ruminate on the feelings, which is cathartic. Singing with the piano and guitar, I feel a sense of wholeness and deep comfort. Like the music is a

friend hugging me in times of distress. I don't feel lonely when I am playing music, even if I am alone. When I am spontaneously expressing, I am in a sense dialoguing with myself, grasping what I am feeling in a different capacity than with thinking alone. Thinking can be too overwhelming.

Especially when I am in the process of writing a song, and I am not mimicking anything, I have what feels like a back and forth dialogue. If I can stay in that mode, sometimes I get lost in a creative thread in which I feel as if I am a conduit for music. Like I am being mused, and I can create something that feels like I grasped something important. When I am experiencing the positive aspects of singing, I feel like I remember that what I can do with music is valuable. I have a strong emotional response when this happens. I feel elated and out of body, perhaps oneness with the music and a sense that the universe is listening, which feels empowering and powerful. This is starkly different from those other times when I am feeling blocked creatively.

I have gone through periods where I cannot seem to make anything that I feel is good enough and it is impossible to produce anything. My critical voice gets so loud that it's impossible to feel good about anything I write. So, while singing can feel very therapeutic for me, sharing my music leaves me at the mercy of others' opinions, and this is triggering of self-judgment.

I have had to adapt to the predominant feeling of disappointment towards my abilities. I feel a kind of a pseudo affection for that feeling now, which I think has been my way to cope with what seems like an inextricable part of my experience of singing. It's a constant cyclical battle between wanting to put myself out there to do what I feel gives me a purpose and meaning and feeling disabled by my fears and expectations around putting myself out there in such an exposing way. Nevertheless, I keep going, and I am now finding value in what I do musically by



cheering up people at work with my music and doing more comedic songs. In this way, I use music to entertain, while also using my music to soothe and relax the people around me. This reminds me of the value in what I do and gives me a sense of purpose, which I feel is vital for my mental health.

### **Rex: Intimate Harmonies**

The first time I remember singing, I was six years old. One of my teachers was leaving, and I hated her. I was happy she was going, but everyone around me was so sad. I remember standing up and singing a song, and everyone was touched by what I had done. The teacher who was leaving cried. That was a powerful moment for me. At that moment I used my voice to change the feeling in the room and bring a sense of togetherness.

Not much has changed now that I am older. I still feel that music is about connecting with others in a shared experience and bringing joy to other people, amongst other things. Last year I was on a bus travelling out in the middle of nowhere with a group of people, and the driver asked us to request a song. I asked him to put on ‘Hold Me Closer Tiny Dancer’, and everyone joined in. It was amazing.

Just like the six-year-old me, I inspired that special moment with that song, and I felt a joyful connection to those people around me, even though most of them were strangers. The way that music gives me that feeling of closeness with people, that’s powerful, and I guess one of the things makes it healing. I don’t feel alone when I am singing. I not only have a close connection with music but also, when my voice is in harmony with another person, it’s as if singing is another language. Perhaps it is the language of intimacy.

I’m the only person in my family who is musical. Music from an early age deeply touched me. When I first started singing, I was in my late teens, and I was exploring my rebellious spirit

and listening to a lot of angry music. It was very heavy, distorted, and screamy. Later, I explored my voice much more through other genres and discovered how my voice is pretty flexible.

Mimicking other people's voices and playing with accents were other ways I explored my voice, and perhaps also different ways of being. I enjoyed making other people laugh doing imitations, so there was again that connection with other people that I got using my voice. Having that flexibility in my voice and learning guitar quickly, I was able to express ideas easily. I learned guitar by thinking of the chords like personalities, each with their own feeling and colour, so to speak. Bringing them to life in this way helped me to connect with that process of learning and having these instruments gave me a way to express myself when it wasn't as easy in other ways.

I always have had music playing in my head that I had to get out. Moments where it's like music flowing through me from somewhere else. When I think of an idea for a song, it tends to come in those moments when I am in a Zen-like state, like in the car without distractions. Perhaps a melody comes or a drum beat, but I gradually piece songs together in these heightened moments of concentration.

When I am singing just for me and letting whatever is in my head come through, I want to be alone. I don't want to feel like I always have the spotlight on me. I perform for that. When I am singing alone, I do it because it feels good and calming, especially when I am going through something difficult.

I recall when I was in my early twenties, like 20 or 21 and I was getting over a break-up, I wrote this ballad that succinctly summed up how I felt. Whenever I would sing it, it would bring me a sense of closure on the subject, and it was a nice way to, sort of, reconcile the traumatic event.

Singing with people who I may have had some difficult times with can feel very cathartic, like a nice way of healing old wounds. Singing the songs that we used to sing together again felt easy, and I remember intertwining our voices again felt very nice, very intimate. Music seems to bring ease to times of tension and helps me to go through whatever is going on. With my songs, I capture these moments, relationships, or time periods and the songs mark a time in my life. I can use my songs to reflect on the past, but it also helps me to move forward. Often, I feel motivated to finish an album because I am ready to move into the next chapter of my life, and songs can really bring me back to that time and the feelings there.

The songs that I write are personal, but they are relatable so it's easy to share them with an audience and we can share in that experience. An idiom is something you can sort of do to hold up an aesthetic that you're really fond of, like metal or rock 'n' roll or blues or whatever, but without having to get too vulnerable. I mean vulnerability is something I go back and forth on. I have songs that I would consider really sort of vulnerable, but a larger portion of my work is sort of fun, so I have never had a problem sharing that stuff with the audience because I never feel overly exposed.

In the past, I used to struggle more with feeling critical about what I am writing, but now I have heard so much music that it feels like anything goes at this point. When I am writing, it's quite deliberate and well thought out. But in moments when I am performing and when I am alone singing my mind goes blank. I am in the moment. I can get lost in the music. It feels good to play. It feels harmonious. It feels like I'm part of a group and it's a good feeling.

### **Gilly: The Sum is Greater Than Its Parts**

My earliest memory I have of singing was when I would sing with my friend for the adults when I was about nine or ten years old. I remember really enjoying singing and wanting to

be a singer, but I felt that my friend was better than me and this made me feel jealous. I remember saying to my mum, 'I don't think I will be an opera singer', and I remember she replied by saying, 'I think that's a good idea.' I still feel that I am inadequate when it comes to singing, so I hadn't had much of a singing practice until much later in my life when I joined a choir. Now I've been singing in this choir for about four years.

Growing up and even now, people in my life did not seem to hesitate to tell me that I should shut up when I sing. My husband and my grandchildren have told me to stop singing, which I laugh off. Since I have become self-conscious about my voice, I sing more for myself or in a group setting.

I recall a few lovely memories singing with others. One was with a friend, and another was with my dad and both times we were driving and singing songs we knew, together. This made these moments memorable, and it helped me to bond with them. I often wished and felt frustrated that I could not sing like other people who were more talented because I really did enjoy singing a lot. Now I suppose I have accepted that I am not very good and I sing for myself.

I know I tend to be quite self-critical and singing is one area where, if I am in a group setting or on my own, I don't feel very self-conscious. I have some moments when I am singing in a choir setting—which is where I sing the most now—when I notice I hit a wrong note or sing out of tune, but this does not stop me too much. The process of learning the songs to prepare for the performances and the glorious sound that the large group makes keeps me quite focused and helps keep me from getting too self-conscious.

Singing hasn't been much of a transformational influence in my life, and I suppose it couldn't be, because I haven't felt qualified to pursue music. Nevertheless, I feel that I benefit from singing because it helps me to feel connected to other people. It relaxes me because I am

focused on something and I can forget my worries. When I am singing, I am very connected to my body, and I feel like I can get out of my head which is useful for me because I get anxiety sometimes. So, while healing is a strong word to describe my experience, I suppose I have healed a bit because I am allowing that space for myself regardless of others' opinions and I guess my own opinion of my voice. In a choir, I feel like the whole is greater than the sum of its parts and it is meaningful to be a part of that and share my voice where it can be appreciated.

### **The Chorus of the Performance Singers**

Lyrical Poem: Phoenix Rise \*

Audio file: [https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/Performance+Singers/1\\_pkzzn8r4](https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/Performance+Singers/1_pkzzn8r4)

My song, my lover  
    He gives me pleasure  
I am not alone  
    When I am with her  
He is my muse  
    Her music inspires  
Fuelling my passion  
    She lights the fire  
And out of ashes  
    We shall rise  
I know myself  
    Through his eyes  
    With her, I fly  
    We laugh, we play  
Forgetting worries  
    In Zen-like state  
Together we create  
    our Phoenix nest  
of valued life  
    my life's purpose

In the experience of singing and performing, the performance singers tell of the importance of musical use of the voice to connect with themselves and form bonds with other people. Through performance and songs, their primary aims were to bring joy to others and

relish the rewards of bringing a sense of togetherness in a shared experience. In preparation for their performances, they spoke of the voice as a means to self-explore and experiment with different ways of being.

Both Nero and Simon created comedy shows to entertain. In the process of creating their shows, they were able to ruminate on feelings and grasp the meaning that their life experiences had for them. They could, in a sense, dialogue with themselves and explore their inner complexity. Like Simon, Rex's songwriting practice was a way for him to reconcile difficult times in his life, to process these difficulties, and move forward. All three used writing and performing to transform challenges into something that would benefit others, and in turn, gave them a sense of purpose and meaning out of even their most difficult experiences. In sharing their experiences with an audience, they did not have to endure their difficulties alone. Gilly recalled pleasant memories of singing with others. The pleasure she got from singing with people cultivated in her a love for singing with other people. Rehearsing in a choir was her way that she could feel a valuable part of something larger than herself. For each of these co-researchers, music seemed to act as a reliable friend that each could turn to for comfort and support, which ameliorated feelings of loneliness and anxiety.

Serving the audience in performance and entertainment, they could bring about laughter and joy. They could voice their difficulties more easily when they transposed their experiences into artistic form. In performance, they were in a sense protected from feeling too vulnerable or overly exposed. As a result, they felt a sense of connection with people about matters that were otherwise challenging to express. The risk was losing contact with the audience and confronting their inner critic, either after performances or in the processes of writing. Eventually, the performance singers were able to accept these challenges as a part of their vocal

practice and enjoy the healing fruits of singing for others. Focusing on the repertoire and the music, they could navigate away from self-consciousness and lose themselves in glorious sound. Serving the art rather than the ego, these co-researchers realised their intrinsic value.

### **5.6: Outro: A Felt Sense of *Something* to a Felt Shift**

The soloists' verses tell of how the voice is a means to connect directly with the body and how sound can act as an alternative way to express feelings, emotions and different parts of self. The process of using the voice freely is described repeatedly as exposing and vulnerable, requiring co-researchers to take risks and confront challenges. In overcoming challenges through vocal freedom, the co-researchers felt empowered, open, and liberated, as they rooted in greater self-trust and self-acceptance. In the different forms of vocal creativity, the co-researchers cultivated a stronger sense of purpose, direction, and meaning. They used their voices to self-soothe, uplift in a mood, and ameliorate feelings of loneliness and anxiety, attesting to the power of the voice to facilitate healing and transformation.

As the themes began to emerge from the co-researchers' stories, my understanding of my experience of vocal creativity gradually became clearer. I started this project with a felt sense that the *healing* aspects of vocal creativity could lead me to something useful for counselling and psychotherapy practice; however, the co-researchers' stories also reminded me of the *difficulties* I often faced on my path to healing through the voice. In this 'outro' I explore the challenges that led to my healing and transformation through my experience of therapeutic voicework, creative singing, and performance singing. To make sense of my experience, I integrate Process-Experiential Theory. I consider the neo-humanistic principle of 'experiencing' as I move through my change process. Emotions theory assists in explaining my process of emotional transformation, as I encounter multiple selves and attempt to understand each through the lens of

dialectical constructivism. I now present to you my researcher voice and my personal voice as they sing in a ‘duet’, accompanied by a symphony of vocal creativity and Process-Experiential Theory (PE theory).

### **The Duet**

The first of a few unexpected revelations from this research journey occurred in the first workshop I attended. The facilitators asked us, the attendees, to voice our improvisational sounds in front of each other in triad groups. Through this exercise, I encountered multiple parts of myself with emotion schemes that had not yet come into my conscious awareness. In PE theory, the structure of self is thought of as comprised of a chorus of singers performing a complicated, improvisational jazz song. These different voices sometimes sing in unison, sometimes in harmony, and other times in dissonance (Stiles, 1999). According to Elliott and colleagues (2004), emotion schemes refer to processes that are active and action-oriented and often consist of preverbal elements (including bodily sensations, visual images, and even smells). Emotion schemes are understood in dialectically constructive terms and are involved in self-organisations that emerge from the dynamic synthesis of emotion schemes. In other words, self-parts or ‘voices’ are constructed based on emotion schemes, which are continuously constructed and reconstructed moment-to-moment but are often re-created, making them appear stable (Greenberg & Whelton, 2001). In EFT, the task of the therapist is to help the client become more aware and make productive use of ever-changing emotions as they arise (Greenberg, 2011). However, maladaptive voices can create impasses for emotion processing.

In the first voicework workshop, my inner chorus of voices came to the fore. Separated into triad groups of three, we were asked to sing or sound improvisationally for 10 minutes each. We were assigned specific roles in this exercise: I was the ‘sounder’, another was the ‘witness’,



and the third person was my ‘friend’. When the time came for me to begin sounding, I felt tension inside and a need to hide. Feeling self-conscious, I closed my eyes and vocalised without words, making soothing humming sounds to curtail my anxieties. This revealed the first self-aspect of the *soothing voice*, which was soon followed by my *inner critic*, who told me that if I vocalised, I would sound bad. The critical voice said that I didn’t sound as good as the other people I heard vocalising around me. I envied the other sounders’ sense of freedom to express themselves with seeming ease. My critical voice’s controlling and punitive measures and my soothing voice’s effort to stifle and escape feelings placed me in a state of stuckness.

I felt glued to my seat, as my maladaptive self-parts attempted to maintain the stability of familiar but negative states. In EFT, a conflict between different voices is a marker of ‘behaviors which signal that [the person] is ready to work on a particular problem’ (Elliott *et al.*, 2004, p. 7). Responding to this marker, my ‘friend’ took my arms and coaxed me to stand up. I closed my eyes to lessen the intensity of the discomfort this action evoked in me. He then helped me to move my body, and he encouraged me to open my eyes. With his support, I accepted his challenge. I took the risk of opening my eyes and attempted to free my voice and move beyond my feeling of stuckness with expansive ‘ah’ sounds, which made me feel powerful. With my friend’s encouragement and modelling, I sent my voice to the other end of the room and challenged my fear to be heard and take up space. Self-consciousness overcame my efforts the more I freed my voice and pushed past the protective parts. Soon, I couldn’t endure the level of exposure I felt, and my soothing voice returned. I sat back down and closed my eyes to self-protect, and I hummed as I waited until the exercise finished.

In fear of losing control, my protective self-aspects resisted experiencing *something*, as it was triggered through improvisational sounding. The presenting self-parts connected with my

negative evaluation of self and revealed my unmet need for love. This led to my protective self-soothing to feel loved, but it also inhibited a forward process as I escaped inwardly. With the response of my friend and the challenge of his task to physically move and expand me beyond my stuckness, I discovered ‘ah’ as a sound representative of feeling prideful, empowered and strong. Sustaining this sound for long stretches gave me a sense of security as I wrestled with feeling insecure. I needed this sound to assist me in reaching what was beneath the protective parts. In EFT, the therapist may help the client recruit a more adaptive emotion, which I symbolised with the ‘ah’ sound.

This practice afforded me greater access to what humanists refer to as ‘experiencing’, which is the basis for human thought, feeling, and action (Gendlin, 1962, p. 21). Experiencing has an ‘active, ever-changing, nothing-like nature’ (Gendlin, 1962). In a context of self-awareness and support, I was able to bear witness to my experiencing processes, which was necessary for me to begin working with my internal chorus as they were revealed through this therapeutic voicework exercise. However, with so many other people present in the workshop, I felt too self-conscious. I needed to experiment with other environments and tasks which could help me towards further emotional processing. In EFT, ‘emotional processing refers to how an individual accesses and becomes aware of their emotional experience, accepts the experience, places meaning on it, and transforms maladaptive emotions with adaptive ones’ (Dillon *et al.*, 2018, p. 406). What I had taken away from my experience was that the ‘ah’ sound was a potentially adaptive emotion when my self-parts tried to protect me from *something* I did not yet understand.

After the first workshop, I continued to wonder what it was about singing and sounding improvisationally in front of others that was so terrifying for me. This question burned in my

mind and seemed to spread everywhere like wildfire. At that moment I was in the ‘immersion phase’ of my heuristic inquiry. Moustakas (1990) observes that during this phase the research seems everywhere in the world, and this aspect of my experience felt particularly inescapable. All I wanted to do was run or put out the fire that had been ignited by my research.

Despite my desire to escape, approaching this research through tacit knowing and the body, I only became more aware of my voice and my body sensations. With the people around me, I noticed that I had difficulty holding eye contact. I also noticed when I posed particular questions with my clients there was a quality in my voice that was distinct—it had a quicker pace and a higher pitch. In these moments, I felt sensations like those which arose when I was in the workshop voicing improvisationally.

In supervision and personal therapy, I explored my sense of *something* on the edge of my awareness. Turning it over in my mind for several months, I got glimmers of insight, but no ‘felt shift’, or a sense of release that follows discovery (Gendlin, 1978). That was until I had a session with a client in which that murky *something* started to become clearer. As I sat with my client in the depths of her shame, I felt uncomfortable with the familiar sensation of anxiety. The silence between us became unbearable. Everything inside me wanted impulsively to find a solution and do something to help alleviate her experiencing—*my* experiencing—but instead, I had to put my feelings aside to be with the dense feeling of her relationship to shame. As my client collapsed inwardly, unable to look at me and unable to speak, I finally knew what that *something* was, but at that moment I had to ground my client back to a sense of safety.

With this moment came the realisation that I had the choice to follow my voice to these parts of myself that had been terribly difficult to face or continue my companionship with anxiety and resistance. My voice had guided me to the truth underneath my fear: a core belief

that I was ‘bad’ and that if someone were to really see me and really hear me, they would know that I am inherently flawed, and I would be found out as inadequate. My shame is silent and invisible under the protection of a controlled, critical, perfectionistic self-part, and I experienced many moments of feeling like I had ‘imposter syndrome’ (Langford & Clance, 1993). My reoccurring overwhelming sensations inhibited my ability to connect with my body and my voice, which impacted my engagement with this heuristic inquiry. However, I knew that this research journey would include personal challenges such as these and I continually sought support from my research supervisor and therapist to help me re-commit to trusting my voice. It was hard not to turn away from shame, thinking I could hide from it. I had to illuminate it to understand it, and vocal creativity assisted me in my process of discovery.

In my experience of shame, there were associated qualities, including tension, fear, and smallness. Identifying these qualities helped me get to what Gendlin (1978) refers to as the ‘crux’ of that feeling and to make meaning out of why I struggled in the voicework workshop. To move forward, I needed a way to contain and move through what had become a maladaptive emotion of shame and evoked my critical voice. I turned to creative singing to enable a sense of safety to come out from hiding. Through this practice, I found tasks that made me feel contained. A ‘task’ is an opportunity that PE therapists may pose to clients to help them ‘develop alternative, more satisfying ways of treating themselves and regulating their emotional distress’ (Elliott *et al.*, 2004, p. 68). The development of a creative singing ‘experiencing task’ began in a personal therapy session in which my counsellor and I discussed the traumatic experiences I believed led to my difficulties in the first voicework workshop.

In this therapy session, my therapist encouraged me to connect with my pain that wore a mask of shame. Feeling into my ‘felt sense’, I felt shame for feeling bad, and I felt *I am bad*.

My critical voice moved to keep me silent as it told me I couldn't show my 'badness' to my counsellor. I imagined the 'ah' note, but I didn't make a sound. I imagined holding the feeling that note would evoke in me if I were to release it and this helped me to come back to my badness, to let it be there, without resisting it. Returning to my felt sense, emotion came, and like a wave, it surged forward. I began to cry from my gut as if it was a deep well within. Knowing my counsellor was with me helped me feel contained, so I could release what I felt made me bad.

Several moments passed before I felt a massive sense of relief. I finally had an experiential understanding of what my mind had known but what I struggled to let my body feel: the deep, empty pain of loss. When I was able to speak to my therapist, I explained that my tears belonged to the little girl who had experienced profound loss and was unable to grieve; instead, she soothed and escaped and pretended that she could handle anything. But the parts that developed out of that loss had caused more suffering later in life and silenced that little girl. Connecting with this young part in my body, I imagined her like my own child inside my belly, and I felt that she needed me to take care of her as I had never done before. From then on, creative singing became a way I could acknowledge her, hear her, and allow her to grieve.

A particular 'experiencing task' allowed her grieving process to unfold. In EFT, an experiencing task is geared at 'helping clients develop access to and symbolise their inner, emotionally tinged experiences and include clearing a space, experiential focusing, and allowing and expressing emotion' (Elliot *et al.*, 2004, p. 101). Elaborating on the notion of an experiencing task, I tuned-in to my felt sense with the intention to sing my loss. To 'evoke the difficulty', meaning to 'bring up particular issues and associated emotions' (p. 103), I turned to one of Paul Newham's (1999) 'Voice Movement Therapy' exercises. For the 'Cry Song' exercise, he instructs readers to consider what happens to the breath, body, and voice when crying (p. 104).

Enacting the gestures that I tended to use when awash in tears, I attempted to ‘cry’ my sense of loss. But it was not long before my critical voice came forward, telling me I’m stupid for trying this exercise and that the neighbours next door will think I am crazy if they hear me. I recruited the ‘ah’ sound, using this to stand up to the critical voice. In this way, I intended to ‘change emotion with emotion’ (Greenberg, 2002). This newly accessed and alternate feeling in ‘ah’ (pride/power) acted as a resource in my personality that helped change the maladaptive state (shame).

Feeling more supported, I made another attempt, but I felt I needed to go in a different direction. Tapping into my felt experiencing, I started to play with my voice, expanding it with various open sounds. I challenged myself to sound bad, to do exactly what the critical voice disliked the most. Playing with my vocal range in this way, I felt self-conscious, afraid someone would hear me being bad. I returned to the ‘ah’ sound again and stayed there as I built the courage to go back to the feelings that the critical voice and my shame interrupted. For a few minutes, I engaged in vocal play, emphasising my badness. I felt uneasy playing in this way, but soon I felt ready to grasp at the notes and tones that fitted with my sense of loss. Giving way to a wailing sounds, I ruminated on the feelings within, and I found a sequence of notes that felt right. I knew they were right because there was a resonance and it wasn’t long before I started crying.

Sound had opened the doors for me to receive a more profound sense of my loss and discover that along with loss are loneliness and longing. I sat with my emotions until I felt ready to sing again. When I did, I felt comforted by my voice, like it was a container to cradle that small part of me as I returned to the sequence. I cried more, allowing whatever arose to flow out into the container of song.

After I took a break to feel into the next course of action, I attempted to expand my vocal expression of loneliness and longing. When I extended my range, I noticed a note that felt and sounded different from the other ones. I instantly felt critical of it and didn't want to use it, which indicated to me that it was exactly the note I need to continue with. In PE theory, identifying this part of my range may be thought of as a 'nonverbal micromarker'. Voice quality as a micromarker can alert therapists to the possible meanings inherent within them. Elaborating on this notion with voicework, I expanded my voice, and, in therapy, I explored the note's meaning for me.

With my therapist, I described the note as 'neglected, weak, and strained' and she pointed out that I had used the same words to describe my younger self when I went through a particularly traumatic time in my life that involved profound loss and loneliness. It was as if, through this note, I could hear my young part's pain. I worked with the note through the 'ah' sound, paying attention to the note and supporting it, with its strength. Over time, the note changed, and I was better able to sustain it, but more importantly, my relationship with it transformed. I didn't fear using the note as much, and I even treasured it. I appreciated its delicacy, its sweetness, and the quality it developed. These shifts resulted in the resolution of the task in which I was able to restructure an emotion scheme. For me, that restructuring was about treasuring the part that I felt was once bad and hidden. Through this process, I was able to own and accept this previously ignored aspect of self and begin to give it what it needed.

After a significant shift such as this, Elliott and colleagues (2004) advise that the best thing that a therapist can do is to help the client to dwell on the shift. The authors explain that the 'dwelling process includes both self-reflection (exploring and symbolising) and simply appreciating or enjoying the change. These processes help clients to consolidate changes' (p.

104). To help me integrate this shift, I chose to write a song about the loss of my grandmother, whose death was the first of many losses that I had been unable to cope with at the time they had occurred. This song represented my newfound ability to grieve for these losses and vocalise from the part that had been silenced. Furthermore, it meant honouring my great grandma's death and, also, what felt like the rebirth of the child part of myself.

\* Audio file: [https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/DJ%27s+Song/1\\_h77fe8zn](https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/DJ%27s+Song/1_h77fe8zn)

I can still hear you coming down the stairs, coming down the stairs.  
I can still see you sitting in your chair, sitting in your chair.  
But those days are long gone and so are the songs we used to play.  
The chance to say goodbye is lost with all of the yesterdays.  
But when I sing, I get the feeling that you are there. Are you there?  
You went all too soon, now all that's left is your empty room, the empty room.  
DJ, DJ why did you have to go away  
DJ, DJ, I won't let your memory fade away.  
So, I'll sing, sing for you.  
La la la la la luh la, la la la, la la, (repeat)

Seven months after the first workshop, I went to a three-day voicework workshop, and I was curious about what my experience would be like since I had reconnected with this child part of me. When they asked us to sing or sound improvisationally in front of others, I knew this would be the real test to see the outcome of these changes I felt. I challenged myself to engage in performance singing and express my inner work in front of others witnessing me. I began by singing the 'ah' sound in that range I found difficult. After a few moments, the sounds of others drowned out my sounds, which made me feel powerless and insignificant. I closed my eyes to hold onto my power. I felt the urge to be small again and return to the defeated shamefulness I had known so well. In the next moment, I remembered the little girl in me, and I did not want to give up on her, refusing to allow the dominating voices of others to silence her again. I began singing 'ah' with greater intensity and with my eyes remaining closed. I felt I needed my eyes



closed to hold onto my experience and anchor myself until the exercise was finished. I held the ‘ah’ note with all my power, and it felt like the note enveloped me, as a protective shield, and nothing could hurt me. I held this note until my turn was over.

After the exercise, I felt proud that my experience did not diminish with my shame, as so often had been the case. I felt whole and confident because of standing up for that little girl inside me and promised her that I would never abandon her, as so many others had, and like I had done before. To me, this meant that I had reached what is referred to in PE theory as ‘resolution’, meaning that I committed to acting differently toward myself. According to Elliott and colleagues (2004), ‘[f]ull resolution uses the emotional intelligence skill of translating emotions into adaptive action to improve life situations’ (p. 105). Appreciating my internal sense of more significant contact with my emotional experiencing, I built trust in my capacity to allow myself to feel that which had made me bad and transformed it into something that made me feel good about myself.

Reaching the end of this research journey, I feel a stronger sense of my life story, as my voice cultivated an embodied sense of it. This was all possible due to a research approach that encourages deep self-reflection and trust in tacit knowing. It seems that tacit knowing inspired my question and it was what helped lead to its answer. I set out wanting to understand the meaning and significance of the voice for healing and discovered that, for us, connecting with the voice means direct access to our complex selves, emotions, and inner knowing so that we may be more fully seen and heard on and off the stage.

In the last therapeutic voicework workshop, the facilitator had me sing my name. Singing out my name, I experienced a ‘felt shift’ and tears started to fall. My tears were my body grasping my whole sense of the situation. I knew I had called back that part of me that had been

hidden away long ago, she was there, in my body and in my song. Vocal creativity has become a practice for me to trust the unknown and honour my body's inner wisdom. Ultimately, trusting in my voice meant trusting in my feelings and emotions as guides to action. With greater self-awareness and a fuller sense of embodiment, I was able to break the silence of trauma and shame and expand beyond the personal inhibitions that manifested in my voice.

### **5.7: Creative Synthesis: The Song**

The following song integrates the core themes of our collective composition. Continuing with the symbolism of a bird, which represents vocal freedom and wind as the creative guide toward healing and transformation, I now present our song.

\* Audio file: [https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/Creative+Synthesis+/1\\_w2ht9qsv](https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/Creative+Synthesis+/1_w2ht9qsv)

## **The Voice**

### **Verse 1**

I see the horizon, far we have flown  
Directed by sound through the unknown  
You by my side, I'm not alone  
The wind as our guide, find our way home  
I wish I could tell you, but it's beyond words  
I'll sing what I have to, as the songbirds

### **Chorus**

Oooooooo who are you?  
It's there in your voice, it will tell you  
Oooooooo forget all your fears  
When you're afraid, song is there  
Sing your song  
The universe sings along

### **Verse 2**

Long we've been trapped in, restrained in a cage

Broken and bound, feeling so afraid  
I knew once I found you, I would find me  
A truth unmistakable would set me free  
My songs and my sounds are my gifts for all of those in pain  
Through the voice we shall heal and sing out our hearts unashamed

**Chorus**

**Verse 3**

In song we connect, experience shared  
Sorrow transformed, I fly without fear  
You will protect me, as a dear friend  
No longer lonely, on you I depend  
You give me a reason, something I can believe  
With song I have meaning, I value the person that's me

**Chorus**

**Bridge**

Life's storms may threaten, turn a blue sky to grey. And if this should happen, you know where  
to go, your voice the rainbow

**Chorus**

## Chapter 6: Exposition

In this chapter, I engage in a heuristic comparison with the findings from Chapter 5 and explore the relationships between the different vocal practices. The choruses in the previous chapter illuminated the core themes and qualities for 1) therapeutic voicework 2) creative singing and 3) performance singing. The Venn diagram below (Figure 3) presents the themes that characterise each vocal practice and represents the relationships between the vocal creativity groups. Concentrating on points 4, 5, 6 and 7, I move the reader toward areas of ‘resonance’ and ‘dissonance’ using charts that have listed the key findings drawn from the choruses. I have highlighted the themes that the groups shared or that were related. The points unhighlighted are the themes that characterise that practice. Following this analysis, I discuss the qualities, underlying mechanisms and processes involved in experiences of vocal creativity.

### Relationships between Vocal Creativity Practices

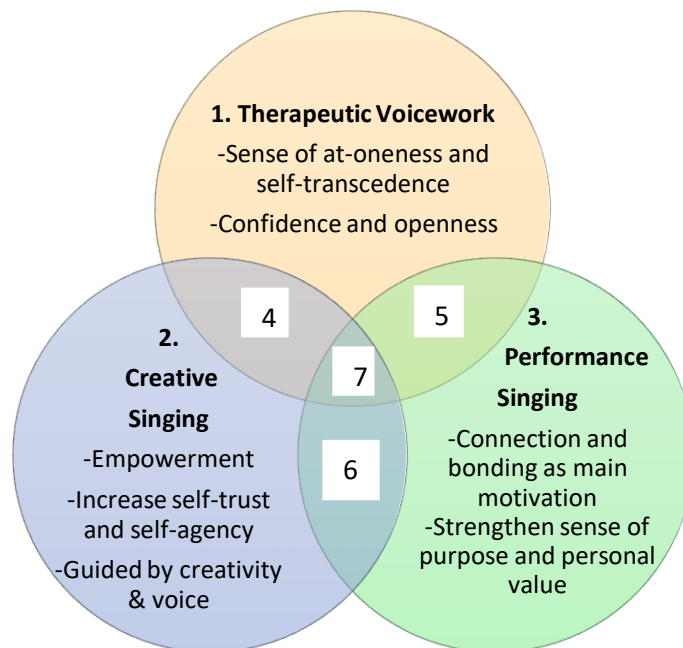


Figure 3: Venn diagram

### Comparing Therapeutic Voicework and Creative Singing

Therapeutic Voicework	Creative Singing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Vocal freedom through play/exploration in sound</li> <li>-An alternative way to access and express feelings</li> <li>-Confidence/self-acceptance/openness/valuing/trust</li> <li>-Inner critic/blocks</li> <li>-Challenge and risk</li> <li>-Need for a supportive environment</li> <li>-Sense of oneness</li> <li>-Direct connection to others</li> <li>-Embodiment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Embodiment</li> <li>-Inner critic</li> <li>-Vocal freedom</li> <li>-Trust in voice/creativity as a guide</li> <li>-Subvert external influences/empowerment</li> <li>-Guided by creativity/voice</li> <li>-An alternative way to express/process/access emotion</li> <li>-Need for a safe environment</li> <li>-Challenge and risk</li> <li>-Confidence/self-acceptance</li> <li>-Connect with or serve others</li> </ul>

Table 6: Intersecting themes at point 4

4. Table 6 above compares the themes of therapeutic voicework (TV) and creative singing (CS). Highlighted are the characteristics that were similar, including vocal freedom, embodiment, inner critic, alternative way to express and access emotion, a way to connect with others, challenge and risk, the need for a safe environment, and positive influence on the self. Overall, I noticed more similarities than differences between these vocal practices. The main difference seemed to centre on the fact that TV occurred in a group and CS occurred solo. This made a difference in the results, with TV pronouncing a sense of oneness with others, and CV emphasising inner trust and the creative process.

### Comparing Therapeutic Voicework and Performance Singing

Therapeutic Voicework	Performance Singing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Vocal freedom through play/exploration in sound</li> <li>-An alternative way to access and express feelings</li> <li>-Confidence/self-acceptance/openness/valuing/trust</li> <li>-Inner critic/blocks</li> <li>-Challenge and risk</li> <li>-Need for a supportive environment</li> <li>-Sense of oneness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-An alternative way to express, process, and transform experiences and feelings</li> <li>-Explore different parts of self and ways of being</li> <li>-Positively affect others</li> <li>-Feeling part of something in shared experience</li> <li>-A sense of purpose and meaning</li> <li>-Protected by performance</li> <li>-Inner critic</li> </ul>

-Direct connection to others -Embodiment	-Calming, soothing, pleasurable -Concentration on music– get out of head, lose a sense of self-consciousness -Challenge and risk
---	--

Table 7: Intersecting themes at point 5

5. In Table 7 (above), I compare therapeutic voicework (TV) and performance singing (PS).

Highlighted are the similarities, including vocal freedom, inner critic, challenge and risk, need for a supportive environment, connection with others, and an alternative way to express and access emotions. While there are similarities, especially in the case of connection to others, these practices mainly differed regarding the intention behind engaging in the practices. TV attendees sought a sense of personal development, while self-expression and connection to others drove the performance singers.

### Comparing Creative Singing and Performance Singing

Creative Singing	Performance Singing
-Embodiment -Inner critic -Vocal freedom -Trust in voice/creativity as a guide -Subvert external influences/empowerment -Guided by creativity/voice -An alternative way to express/process/access emotion -Need for a safe environment -Challenge and risk -Confidence/self-acceptance -Connect with or serve others	-An alternative way to express, process, and transform experiences and feelings -Explore different parts of self and ways of being -Positively affect others -Feeling part of something in shared experience -A sense of purpose and meaning -Protected by performance -Inner critic -Calming, soothing, pleasurable -Concentration on music– get out of head, lose a sense of self-consciousness -Challenge and risk

Table 8: Intersecting themes at point 6

6. Table 8 (above) compares creative singing and performance singing: embodiment, inner critic, vocal freedom, challenge and risk, the need for a safe environment and an alternative way to express process, and access emotion, were shared. Both involve self-expression; however, creative singing appears to be guided by the creative process and developing the inner voice,

whereas performance singing appears more geared toward self-expression, purpose, and meaning through connecting with an audience.

### Comparing Vocal Creativity Practices

Therapeutic Voicework	Creative Singing	Performance Singing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Vocal freedom through play/exploration in sound</li> <li>-An alternative way to access and express feelings</li> <li>-Confidence/self-acceptance/openness/valuing/trust</li> <li>-Inner critic/blocks</li> <li>-Challenge and risk</li> <li>-Need for a supportive environment</li> <li>-Sense of oneness</li> <li>-Direct connection to others</li> <li>-Embodiment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Embodiment</li> <li>-Inner critic</li> <li>-Vocal freedom</li> <li>-Trust in voice/creativity as a guide</li> <li>-Subvert external influences/empowerment</li> <li>-Guided by creativity/voice</li> <li>-An alternative way to express/process/access emotion</li> <li>-Need for a safe environment</li> <li>-Challenge and risk</li> <li>-Confidence/self-acceptance</li> <li>-Connect with or serve others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-An alternative way to express, process, and transform experiences and feelings</li> <li>-Explore different parts of self and ways of being</li> <li>-Positively affect others</li> <li>-Feeling part of something in shared experience</li> <li>-A sense of purpose and meaning</li> <li>-Protected by performance</li> <li>-Inner critic</li> <li>-Calming, soothing, pleasurable</li> <li>-Concentration on music—get out of head, lose a sense of self-consciousness</li> <li>-Challenge and risk</li> </ul>

Table 9: Intersecting themes at point 7

7. Table 9 (above) compares all the vocal creativity practices. Creative singing and therapeutic voicework emphasise the embodied aspect of the experience, and personal development is intentional. Performance singing does allude to embodiment but only regarding how the practice helped to focus concentration on other aspects of the experience, which may include the physical experience of singing. Differences in intention may account for why the CSs and TVs seemed to report more positive feelings toward the self than the PSs. The former focused on personal development, or self-therapy, while the latter did not have the intention to heal through the vocal practice; instead, it was a by-product of the activity. Therefore, intention seemed to affect the results. Therapeutic voicework and performance singing share an emphasis on connecting with others due to the public nature of the environments. Creative singers were more focused on their

creative processes, as they practised in solitude. In the following section (6.2), I discuss the common themes between the different vocal creativity practices listed below.

- Vocal Freedom
- An alternative way to manage, express, process, and transform emotional experiences
- Embodiment
- Challenge (Inner Critic/Blocks) and Risk
- Need for a sense of safety
- Connect with and affect others
- Increased positive feelings towards self

## **6.2: Identified Qualities, Mechanisms and Processes of Vocal Creativity**

Due to the subjective nature of what constitutes healing and transformation, the co-researchers defined what healing and transformation meant for them. The co-researchers were asked to relate their stories to their definitions. The stories told were in the context of the co-researchers' personal histories with their voices. For example, one aspect of Daniel's story was that he had suffered from a stutter throughout his life. Understanding his predicament framed the significance of having an alternative way to express himself and showed the personal triumph of overcoming the inhibitions of verbal language through sound. The co-researchers' each told their stories of triumph as they overcame, in their own ways, their histories of silence, oppression and personal limitation. In this way, including the historical aspect led to a deeper understanding of the significance of their health and wellbeing outcomes.

Overall, research in the singing for health and wellbeing field generally agrees with my findings, as similar themes and aspects were identified in both solo and group settings (Kreutz *et al.*, 2004; Patteson, 2000; Sauvé, 2004; Summers 2014; Whittemore, 1998). These studies emphasise singing as a way for people to feel empowered and authentic, experience a sense of emotional release, change their mood, manage difficult life experiences, and sing for overall enjoyment, meaning and wholeness. Literature within the arts therapies align with my findings,



identifying embodiment (Austin, 2008; Newham, 1998; Rust-D' Eye, 2013; Sokolov, 2012), unity and attunement (Chaiklin *et al.*, 1993; Hall, 2005), emotional expression (Halstrup, 2015; Rust-D' Eye, 2013), risk-taking and increased self-confidence (Natan, 2011) as benefits of integrating voice into arts therapy approaches. To explain this study's findings of *how* co-researchers experienced similar therapeutic benefits, I discuss each of the eight key findings identified through the thematic analysis above and engage relevant literature. The last finding *increased positive feelings towards self* is interwoven throughout the discussion of the other seven findings.

### **Vocal Freedom**

The overarching theme for the three groups is vocal freedom which was associated with healing and transformation but also presented the co-researchers with challenges and risks. Therefore, while vocal creativity generally contributed to healing, almost every co-researcher had 'negative' experiences when vocalising. Vocal freedom is a term I adopted from Summers' (2014) study in which she also found this as a core concept in the experiences of singing for vocal psychotherapists. Sauvé (2004) similarly referred to this concept as 'free, uninhibited expression of emotion' (p. 111) in her study of the effects of vocal improvisation. My understanding of vocal freedom is the practice of uninhibited emotional vocal expression and the inclusion of improvisational, nonverbal, primal and melodic vocal sounds. Vocal freedom may be compared to Austin's (2008) 'free associative singing' technique. Like Freud's (1938) technique of free association, clients are encouraged to verbalise whatever comes into their mind with the expectation that this will give way to unconscious images, memories, sensations, and feelings. However, vocal freedom differs from Austin's free associative singing, as vocal freedom is closer to vocal improvisation—a creative process which bridges the conscious and

unconscious and whereby sounds act as a symbolic language (Austin, 1996). Vocal freedom enabled co-researchers to be spontaneous and allow the natural flow of feeling and impulses.

Increased vocal freedom for therapeutic voiceworkers was made possible through the exercises suggested by the group facilitator, whereby co-researchers could explore themselves in creative sound play. Creative singers experienced vocal freedom as they followed their creativity to expressions that were ‘authentic’ or ‘true’ for them. For performance singers, vocal freedom seemed to centre on a creative means to communicate their inner world to the outer world, sharing in a meaningful experience that made them feel a part of something larger than themselves and their difficulties. In this experimentation with their voices through vocal freedom, co-researchers gave their emotions and parts of self a place within sound to be experienced more fully, without trying to change them. The practice of connecting with themselves more fully in this way could then extend to other aspects of their lives.

### **An Alternative Way to Manage, Express, Process, and Transform Emotional Experiences**

The vocal freedom each of the co-researchers experienced seemed to create change on an emotional level. As they explained, it allowed them an alternative way to access, release, and process, transform, and become more aware of emotional experiences. Co-researchers reported that they could directly access their feelings through singing and sounding. Diana mentioned the importance of increased emotional awareness that singing afforded her and how singing helped her to pay attention to her internal world. Also, Morgan and Diana spoke about the possibility of accessing and becoming more aware of feelings they had absorbed from others, or possibly unconscious material, through singing and songwriting. The voice's ability to access emotions and unconscious material may be why many co-researchers felt vulnerable and exposed when they engaged more freely with their voices. However, vocal freedom was also what gave co-

researchers a sense of ‘release’, ‘catharsis’, and ‘cleansing’, as if their emotions or feelings were expelled through sound.

Putting feelings and experiences in combination with music, melody, and words, helped co-researchers to be more present with, release, and process their experiences. For example, Diana, Morgan, Nero, Simon, and Rex mentioned that through writing songs and singing, they could ‘dialogue’ with themselves, reconcile difficult life experiences, and grasp the whole of situations. Rex and Simon said that this creative process enabled reflection and assisted in moving on from periods of their lives. Moreover, through song and sound, co-researchers transformed their experiences into something that positively affected others. Co-researchers from each group spoke about the effects that their songs had on listeners and how this transformed their perspective of their own experiences: difficult experiences became something positive in other people’s eyes, and this helped them to view their experiences differently as a result.

Much of the literature has discussed the idea that singing gives people a sense of emotional release (Austin, 2008; Baird, 2008; Clift and Hancox, 2001; Silber, 2005) and fulfils emotional needs (Litawa 2018). However, I found only one other study that mentioned how vocal freedom could be ‘a conscious way to deal with, transform, process or resolve emotions’ (Sauvé, 2004, p. 177). Perhaps vocal improvisation, which Sauvé’s study covered, and the use of songwriting in my study, may account for the lack of discussion around this aspect of the experience in the singing for health and wellbeing field, as most research has focused on the action of singing than creative use of the voice. Songwriting and vocal improvisation seemed to support the processing and transformation of emotion as it is sustained and expressed through these creative processes.

## Embodiment

Through direct connection with feelings and breath through singing and sounding, co-researchers simultaneously connected with their bodies. In this way, singing and sounding is an embodied experience, as the co-researchers described feeling more present, connected, and ‘in the moment’ when vocalising. The physical and bodily benefits of singing have also been present in literature in the field of singing for health and wellbeing (Beck *et al.*, 2000; Grape *et al.*, 2002; Kreutz *et al.*, 2004; Reich, 1948; Sauv , 2004; Sokolov, 2012; Summers, 2014). My study offers a deeper understanding of the benefits reported in these experimental studies and builds on the work of Sauv  (2004) and Summers (2014).

Summers (2014) found that singing was embodied in the sense that it made people in her study feel present, mindful and at ‘home’ (p. 185). Singing was also a way for the participants to feel congruent and harmonious within. Similarly, Nero, Jennifer, Diana and Gilly articulated that they were able to ‘get out of their heads’ as they concentrated on singing and felt the inner vibration from producing sound. This inner resonance made them feel more relaxed, calm and soothed. Sauv  (2004) discussed how vocal improvisation effects the ‘energetic body’ and can create inner balance and movement within the bodily system. Diana and Daniel spoke of processes whereby they could create an inner, energetic movement through singing whereby sound ‘unblocked’ emotions that were ‘stuck’ inside their bodies. This experience made them feel a sense of release and helped them move through hurdles that arose in their lives.

Moreover, Morgan’s and Diana’s verses suggest the possibility that unconscious psychological material or material from the environment can be made audible through the voice as it is creatively released from the body. As Gendlin (1978) said, ‘[t]he unconscious is the body’ (p. vii), which is to say that our bodies are a source for information and innovation.

Gendlin argues that our bodies hold unconscious information and encompass information we absorb from the wider cultural environment. This information gives an alternative understanding of the work of Reich (1948) who influenced the theory and practice of dance movement therapy.

From tapping into this bodily knowledge, co-researchers may have sensed more aspects of the situation than can be thought, which may account for why co-researchers were surprised at the information that their vocal practice helped bring into conscious awareness. As for Jennifer and Diana, they stated that singing gave them a sense of inner safety, as it helped them to shift anxious thoughts and moods. For Phoebe and me, vocal creativity was a way to heal trauma and regain a sense of bodily presence or ownership. Overall, singing and sounding helped co-researchers feel more grounded and centred as they connected with their breath and their bodies through their resonant voices.

In the experience of creative singing and therapeutic voicework, the body was mentioned much more than it was in the interviews with the performance singers. The lack of mentioning the body could likely have been because the performance singers' concentration was more on the musical material, rather than their internal, moment-to-moment experience. Contrastingly, creative singers and therapeutic voiceworkers intimately worked with their voices, often concentrating squarely on the voice and noticing the effect this experience was having on them internally.

### **Challenge and Risk**

In the vulnerable experience of directly connecting with the body, feelings, and emotions, each co-researcher reported challenges which presented as an inner critic or blocks against which they struggled to sustain vocal freedom. The origins of these challenges lay in past experiences, their own critical opinions of themselves, and the larger family and social expectations they

perceived concerning their vocal expressions. It was apparent that those who engaged in the technical aspects of music making were more judgemental of their expressions and creations. Natan (2011) similarly found that '[w]ork with voice quite frequently causes resistance on the part of clients, stemming from the fear of what their spontaneous voice may expose after years of being silenced and subordinated to normative conventions of vocal expression (p. 42). In Natan's study, he noticed that drama therapists exploring their voices through the Sesame approach were able to bypass the inner judge through movement and metaphor.

Regarding judgement during singing, Summers (2014) referenced Oddy (2011) who found that singers had three general experiences of judgement: being judged by self and others, not being judged, and the discovery of singing as a channel for emotion and spirit. Co-researchers seemed to fall within one of these experiences when perceiving their vocalisations. These findings contribute further knowledge to two other studies which also found negative emotional experiences in the experience of performance singing (Dingle *et al.*, 2013; Tonneijck, *et al.*, 2008).

The presence of challenge and risk in the experience of vocal creativity is echoed in Tonneijck and colleagues' (2008) study, in which they found that choir singers similarly faced difficulties when singing. Dingle and colleagues (2013) identified that singing for some choral singers led to performance anxiety and stress. My study's findings add insight into factors that may underlie the 'negative' experiences reported in these two studies. In both studies, negative experiences were overcome by a sense of safety in the choir environment. In my research, I similarly found that growth seemed to result from overcoming these challenges but required co-researchers to take the risk of vulnerability and discomfort, which was not discussed explicitly in the research of Dingle *et al.*, (2013) or Tonneijck *et al.*, (2008).

## **Need for Safety**

Like these two studies (Tonneijck *et al.*, 2008; Dingle *et al.*, 2013), persevering through challenges was made possible by a sense of safety in the environment. Creative singers required solitude to reduce challenges, as the possibility of others listening affected their vocal freedom. Many of the co-researchers said that singing with others around whom they felt comfortable helped them quiet their inner critic and self-consciousness. The support they received from other people, such as the audience or the group members, enabled co-researchers to explore and share themselves in greater depth. As a result, many of the co-researchers reported increased confidence, self-trust, and self-acceptance. In this way, both solo singing and group singing were therapeutic for the co-researchers, as some required solitude to expand their voice fully, while others needed the group to support them through challenges. Acceptance and nonjudgement seemed key conditions for all vocal creativity groups to maintain vocal freedom.

## **Connection with Self and Others**

Connecting with others through sound was also facilitative of co-researchers' healing because they felt a part of something larger than themselves, or a sense of community. Sauv  's (2004) study on vocal improvisation also found that group singing gave people a sense of community. Furthermore, singing with others allowed resonance in shared experience, which seemed to feel empathetic for co-researchers. They did not feel alone in their experience when they were able to share it with others and for people to relate to it. The experience of singing with other people was also often associated with spirituality and at-oneness, whereby the lines between the self and others seemed to disappear in co-creation of simultaneous sound.

Listening to others' sounds also had the potential to wake up dormant sounds within co-researchers. When I was in the voicework workshop, someone in the group made a sound that

resonated with me, and these expressions acted as catalysts to bring out my sounds or emotions. It also felt more direct connecting with people through sound, which co-researchers described as more intimate than communicating with words. Many of the co-researchers described singing as a means to enhance relationships, giving a sense of closeness to heal old wounds and cross barriers they had with others. Sauvé (2004) also found the theme of relationships to be a persistent pattern in her study. She concluded that improvisation facilitates connection on various levels, including self, body, and other people: ‘Words such as connection and communion kept recurring not only in personal terms (i.e., relation to the voice, the body, the inner-self) but also interpersonally and transpersonally (i.e., relation among singers, to the spirit, to the universe, to cosmos)’ (p. 139). The findings suggest the importance of relationships and connection, as a pattern in all three forms of vocal creativity. These connections seemed to result in more positive feelings toward the inner self, with most of the co-researchers noting how vocal freedom facilitated increased self-acceptance as a result of these connections.

### **6.2.1: Underlying Mechanisms of Vocal Creativity**

There appeared to be three main underlying mechanisms in the experiences of vocal creativity: 1) improvisation; 2) intention, and; 3) interaction and musical holding. By ‘underlying’, I mean that the participants did not explicitly address these features in the interview. ‘Interaction’ and ‘musical holding’ are in the same point to illustrate the relationship between these features. In this section, I explain each of these mechanisms and how they influenced the healing and transformational outcomes of the co-researchers.

#### **Improvisation**

Underneath the idea that improvisation is an important factor in co-researchers’ experiences of healing is a sense of vulnerability and being truly seen and heard through raw



means of expression. This raw means of expression often seemed to occur through vocal improvisation, which is a form of vocal play in which a person spontaneously allows sound to come forth in an unstructured way. Vulnerability researcher, Brené Brown (2012) defines vulnerability as ‘uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure.’ Improvisational vocal expression is the practice of vocalising emotions and could be thought of as a practice involving being with the unknown and risking emotional exposure. The vulnerable experience of expressing emotion as it arises, while challenging, is also what seemed to enable healing of that which had been less conscious or accepted.

Through years of research, Brown (2012) uncovered a pattern about ‘wholehearted people’. Wholehearted people are those with healthy relationships, deep connections with parents or children, compassion and trust. All these people had in common the realisation of the power of emotion, and all leaned into discomfort rather than avoiding it. In the experience of vocal creativity, co-researchers practised accessing and sustaining their emotions, even when they were uncomfortable. Additionally, co-researchers learned to accept and develop emotions that they were unaware or afraid of. In the cases of songwriting and performing, the co-researchers were able to reflect on and transform their emotional experiences. Through vocal creativity, co-researchers leaned into emotion, which seemed to enable emotional processing and healing.

## **Intention**

Intention seemed to play a role in co-researchers’ experiences of healing through the voice. Therapeutic voicework gave co-researchers opportunities to work with their voices to develop personally. Each therapeutic voiceworker reported experiences of significant transformation. The creative singers also had the intention to use sound to heal and similarly

developed their capacity to engage with their emotional experience. The performance singers, in contrast, did not hold the intention to heal through singing, but experienced therapeutic benefits as by-products of their vocal practice. Since performance singers had their attention and intention on composing and performing music, this is likely why their experiences contrasted more with the other two vocal creativity groups. While each group experienced different levels of judgement when vocalising, Jennifer's story illustrated that it is possible to shift judgement and become more accepting. Through intentionally working with her voice to personally develop and persevere through challenges when singing, Jennifer eventually was able to value the uniqueness of her voice. Jennifer's acceptance of her voice led to her desire to find audiences that also value her voice, instead of continuing to please audiences at the expense of her art. As the sociocultural predominance of 'musical elitism' (Bunch, 1995) contributes more judgement and pressure to sing well from a technical perspective, based on co-researchers' experiences, I speculate that intention to heal through the voice may increase self-awareness and play a positive role in shifting musical elitist perspectives.

## **Interaction**

The need for certain conditions in the environment may suggest that vocal freedom is facilitated and sustained by non-judgemental relationships and a safe environment. Furthermore, personal trust in the voice or music seemed to offer a sense of safety when co-researchers sang in solitude. It appeared that Nero, Diana, Morgan, and Rex felt that the interplay between their voices and the music was like a person they could interact with and depend on in times of distress. Singing and songs also appeared to function as something with which the felt sense could interact. Songs may offer a 'safe container' to hold and focus attention on difficult feelings, forming the felt sense of the situation without overwhelming the person. Correspondingly, Sauvé

(2004) identified vocal improvisation as a 'container' which made people feel able to connect with their feelings safely. Laury Rappaport (2010) stated in her FOAT method, which incorporates sound, that

Both focusing and art therapy provide ways to obtain a healthy distance from the trauma to be able to work on it without being overwhelmed or flooded by the experience. Art therapy provides materials to contain, symbolize, and externalize the felt sense into the art processes. (p. 140).

The present study provides insight into *how* sound may enable emotional processing without the person being overwhelmed. Following my felt sense to inform my sounds, an interaction between sound and my felt-sense was created. Gendlin (1991) describes the need to combine the inner-directed movement with something that helps the felt sense to move outward:

If therapy deals with only inner data, whether emotion or felt sense, it misses a crucial dimension of the process of change. Therapy must involve more than focusing on inner data in a reflective inner space. There also needs to be movement outward, into interaction. Focusing as such does not sufficiently provide the moving out. (p. 267).

This study suggests that vocal practices combined with an interaction with the felt sense could assist in the 'moving out' Gendlin describes here. In other words, vocal creativity and Focusing may enhance each other, enabling balance for accessing the inner felt sense while unfolding its wisdom through creative expression. Using sound to interact with the felt sense may help people to feel contained or held because it may enable what PE theory calls 'distancing'. In PE theory, distancing allows clients who tend to be swamped by their feelings to acquire sufficient distance to regulate and modulate their affective reactions (Elliott *et al.*, 2004, p. 154). When clients are over-aroused, PE therapists may help the client to use an experiential

focusing task (Gendlin 1978) in asking them to tune into alternative sources of information that they have within themselves. Combining the attention on felt experiencing with the ability of sound to symbolise the felt sense, may maintain a safe distance from the emotion, helping clients to work through their experiences with a greater sense of safety and control. Rappaport has put this notion into practice, as she invites clients to tune in to their felt experience in a variety of ways including, visual art, movement, and sound. This study contributes insight from the lived experiences of people, providing evidence in support of Rappaport's practical applications.

### **Musical Holding**

In addition to sound functioning as a protective container and the creative counterpart to the felt sense, voice and song seemed to function as a way to bypass self-consciousness. Diana spoke about following the creative 'thread' and Nero talked about identifying with the music instead of the ego. In this way, they seemed to transcend themselves in the process of creative, felt experiencing, connecting with something that seemed beyond themselves, their insecurities and their psychological predicaments. Rex referred to this as a 'zen-like' state where his concentration was completely on his creative process. Sauv   (2004) found that 'improvisation can contribute to clearing the chattering or judgemental aspects of the mind' (p. 120). For this aspect of the experience, Bailey and Davidson (2003, 2005) made a convincing case for the relevance of Csikszentmihalyi's 'flow theory' in understanding the mechanisms through which singing can be beneficial to health. Csikszentmihalyi (1990, 1997) developed the idea of 'flow', meaning that the flow of the work is so rewarding that people who experience it seek it continuously. Flow happens between anxiety and boredom, or at a specific level of psychological arousal. Somatic creativity researcher, Krichman (2014) summarises the different elements that characterise 'flow', including merging of awareness and action, the lack of worry about failure, a

loss of the sense of time, and a sense of consciousness that is neither distracted nor self-monitored. Flow seems to occur holistically, where the person operates organically as the mind and body are integrated. In this state, the self-conscious part of the person dissolves as the person ‘loses’ his or herself in the process.

Through vocal creativity, many of the participants spoke about experiencing a sense of losing themselves in the music and connecting with something beyond themselves. Their sense of self-transcendence linked with the spiritual aspect that many co-researchers discussed in their accounts. Links between spirituality, intuition, being in the moment and embodiment were also highlighted in Summers’ (2014) and Sauvé’s (2004) studies. A state of consciousness in which a person transcends the self, while maintaining a sense of personal identity, correlates with religion and spirituality researcher MaryCatherine Burgess’ (2008) work. In her thesis-derived book *A New Paradigm of Spirituality and Religion: Contemporary Shamanic Practice in Scotland*, Burgess discusses ways in which people ‘awaken’ their consciousness of being part of something larger than themselves, and how they expand their ways of contributing to healing on a larger scale. In the present study, co-researchers seemed to experience the kind of inner awakening that Burgess refers to through vocal creativity. As a result of their vocal experiences, many were called to awaken other people to a sense of spiritual connectedness and empowerment through the voice.

In the co-researchers’ descriptions, they said this feeling of at-oneness and connection with the music, group, or audience helped them feel less alone. This aspect of the phenomenon could be understood in terms of ‘musical holding’. The notion of ‘musical holding’ links to Winnicott’s work (1971, cited in Gratier & Danon, 2009) in which he discusses the need for psychological ‘holding’ that is created by the vocal quality of the motherese for the infant’s

healthy development. Gratier (1999) observed that this ‘musical holding’ is fundamental for healthy development. To understand people’s experience of healing, singing alone or with others may provide this ‘musical holding’. This recent infant research correlates with Moses (1954) and his emphasis on the significance of the baby’s preverbal vocalisations as necessary for development and psychological health. Held by the musical container, co-researchers’ vocalisations could be expressed and heard, leading to experiences of connection, belonging, and self-transcendence.

### **6.2.2: The Duet: Processes of Vocal Creativity and PE Theory**

In ‘The Duet’, I intersected PE theory and vocal creativity. The main intersection points between the core themes of vocal creativity and PE theory were embodiment, challenge and risk, safety in the environment, connection to self, positive feelings towards the self, and an alternative way to access, release, process, transform and become more aware of emotional experiences. Influenced by some of the processes discussed in the conversational interviews with co-researchers, I broadened how I used my voice to heal.

Diana’s example of ‘finding the note’ that she or her client needed through feeling into her body was useful when I was confronted with blocks. Remembering what Diana said, I found the note ‘ah’ to give me a sense of power that I needed to break through my stuckness. PE theory helped me to understand how this can facilitate change, as I was able to use an adaptive emotion to replace a maladaptive emotion.

Phoebe’s story about working with her ‘badness’ resonated with my process. Knowing she had come to a similar crossroads gave me strength when I needed to share what I felt would make me bad. Her story helped me to accept my badness. Through the lens of PE theory, I was

better able to work with my sense of badness knowing that it was protected by maladaptive parts of self and that I could develop alternative ways to protect this child part that felt bad.

Daniel's experience of practising the note that was difficult for him was supportive for me, as I also encountered a note which I struggled to produce. His perseverance helped to inspire my ability to move through challenges as I worked to strengthen the part of me which had been silenced. In this way, we were paying attention to voice quality, which is an aspect of EFT practice. I was curious about the auditory quality of my voice as something perhaps indicative of my personality and my difficulties. This awareness enabled me to work with my voice symbolically to heal past trauma.

Connecting with my child part brings Susan to mind and her story about reclaiming her joyful part of self. She told of how the voice can help us to reconnect with feelings and parts of self which have been silenced. A dialectical constructivist view of the self in PE theory was helped me identify and navigate my different parts that were illuminated through vocal creativity.

Like Simon and Rex, songwriting assisted reflection on my transformation to integrate changes. Composing a song to reflect on, and consolidate, my changes were a necessary part of my process. PE theory's emphasis on helping clients to dwell on their shifts supported my need to encapsulate my experience in song. Performing these changes further solidified the shifts and gave me a sense of integrity to endure future difficulties that may likely arise.

Furthermore, performing gave me an experiential sense of Diana and Rex's shared sense of feeling protected when performing. As Diana said, 'when you sing, it's like nothing can mess with you.' PE theory discusses how full resolution occurs when we actively commit to our

change, and performing, for me, meant taking the stance to continually care for my child part, even in the face of great challenge.

Integrating PE theory with the experience of vocal creativity expanded my understanding of the healing potential of the voice, as it assisted in deconstructing how sound can facilitate emotional processing, work with internal multiplicity, and lead to profound emotional transformation. Our stories illustrate how sound has acted as a tool for self-expression, healing, and transformation.



## Chapter 7: A Response to the Call

This chapter explicates my concluding response to the call of this study. This study's call was to explore the following question: *What is the nature and meaning of experiences of vocal creativity, and what can these experiences tell us about the human voice's potential for healing?* In section 7.2, I refer to the literature surrounding the therapeutic use of the voice and identify how my research has contributed to our knowledge of the phenomenon under study. The sections that follow cover practical implications and limitations of the study, along with an 'Encore' which explicates potential areas for further research. I complete the chapter with concluding thoughts in the 'Finale'.

### 7.2: The Human Voice's Potential for Healing and Transformation

This study provides unique insight into the nature and meaning of the experience of vocal creativity. Pioneers of voicework in psychotherapy discuss the voice as a way to express and identify internal multiplicity, enable emotional catharsis, and resolve trauma or other somatic symptoms in the body. Research in the singing for health and wellbeing field indicates that singing supports social, mental, physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual wellbeing. Studies in the arts therapies indicate the embodied nature of vocal sound, the power of metaphor and roles to enable self-expression, and the way that voice can be used as a creative mechanism to facilitate healing. The findings of this study elaborate on this body of research, evidencing some of the observations put forth by voicework pioneers, and, more specifically, on similar research, such as the work of Sauv   (2004) and Summers (2014) who explored individuals' experiences of vocal practices, in-depth. However, neither Summers (2014) or Sauv   (2004) compared different vocal practices for how each differs or are similar. Previous comparison

studies were focused on group or solo singing, professional or amateur singers' experiences, or marginalised or middle-class individuals' experiences of singing.

This study contributes knowledge about the nature and meaning of vocal creativity as it considers the complexity of individuals' experiences of creative singing, therapeutic voicework, and performance singing and in both solo and group contexts. Through this exploration, I was able to consider not only how the contexts impacted on co-researchers' experiences of a variety of vocal practices, but also what healing aspects characterised each practice. Illuminating these factors addresses the lack of clarity within the singing for health and wellbeing field regarding how each practice contributes to health and wellbeing outcomes, as it reaches for the qualities, mechanisms and processes underlying peoples' experiences of healing and transformation through the voice.

The present study found that people experienced both solo and group contexts as enabling for self-exploration and self-expression through sound. In either case, a sense of safety and support was necessary. Solo performance singing was found to present the most challenges for co-researchers, including the most susceptibility to inner and outer judgement. Performance singing also involved less improvisational practices compared to the other vocal creativity practices, lacked intention on personal development, and performance singers seemed also to have less awareness of the embodied aspect of the experience, all of which were important to the healing outcomes associated with therapeutic voicework and creative singing. The results suggest that individuals who experience acceptance and valuing of their vocalisations were more likely to sustain vocal freedom. Vocal freedom appeared to enable healing or transformational processes through personal exploration and emotional expression.

This study is also unique in that it considers the personal history of each person's experience vocalising. Including co-researchers' personal history assisted in understanding some of the challenges co-researchers faced in their lives and how they used vocal creativity to ameliorate those predicaments. The co-researchers' personal histories, through the lens of their vocal journeys, revealed the profound triumph of their healing and transformational outcomes, enabling insight into how they overcame their difficulties through song and sound amidst the personal and societal restrictions that had bound them.

This study expands theoretical understanding for elements of vocal practices. Intersecting PE theory with aspects of vocal creativity elucidated how change occurred through singing and sounding. It allowed rich meaning-making of my experiences of the different forms of vocal creativity, as I deconstructed my change process and developed personal knowledge of my different self-parts and emotion schemes. Furthermore, PE theory illuminated how aspects of each vocal practice were healing. Emotion theory and a dialectical constructivist view of self effectively drew out how sound can assist in working with multiple parts of self that may come into conflict. Using sound, I was able to create a safe distance from the emotion so that I was not over-aroused. This allowed a process of emotional transformation through which I was able to learn how to resolve pain from my past. The insight generated from the 'duet' elaborates on EFT and contributes novel theoretical understanding for practitioners working in and outwith music and arts therapies.

### **7.3: Practical Implications for Counselling and Psychotherapy**

The present study has practical implications for counsellors and psychotherapists. The results indicate that the voice can be used as a therapeutic tool in several ways. First, giving the sounds of the voice and vocal quality greater significance, practitioners may listen for parts of

self and offer clients opportunities to develop meaning about the sounds of their voices as a window into the body and emotions. In Emotion Focused Therapy, counsellors already explore the meaning of a client's voice quality to develop self-understanding. Voicework may elaborate on this micromarker by offering clients the opportunity to manipulate the sounds of the voice to shift emotional states, recruit adaptive emotions, and explore different ways of being.

Secondly, sound can be used as an alternative way to symbolise feelings and emotions. Using sound to represent emotion may allow ways to facilitate movement, resonance, and catharsis, whereby the person may gain a sense of working with the emotion more directly than might be possible through solely talking about the emotion. Symbolising through sound, clients may engage their bodies in a deeper way than with words alone. Using the voice to locate feelings and emotions in the body, the resonance created from vocal sound may assist in creating movement within. Alternative symbolisation through sound may be especially useful for people who struggle with producing speech. People who have experienced trauma may also benefit from an alternative, embodied means to express their experience.

Thirdly, as the study imparts the significance of connection through sound, the therapist could mirror vocalisations as an alternative way to empathetically attune to clients in bodily resonance. This study also suggests the importance of the voice quality of the therapist. This study suggests that awareness of tone, pace, and overall voice quality may be a useful tool to develop therapists' self-awareness.

Fourthly, this study emphasised the difficulties that people may experience when expanding their voices. The vulnerable nature of self-expression through the voice indicates the importance of remaining sensitive and tentative as a practitioner when considering integrating

sound into therapy practice. A strong therapeutic alliance is recommended before offering tasks that incorporate sound and song.

Fifthly, the stories that the co-researchers have shared provide important insights into the lives of singers and creatives. The stories have illuminated some of the difficulties that this client group may face in their creative endeavours and may broaden ways of working with this population. Insight about how to move through challenges may develop an understanding of how to work with creative, or emotional processing, blocks.

#### **7.4: Limitations of the Study and Encore**

Although this research was carefully prepared, I am aware of its limitations. The sample size for each vocal creativity group was small with only 3-4 people in each group. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalised. Future research could test my findings using larger sample sizes for more generalisable results, and this would also enhance the dependability and transferability of this study.

The co-researchers engaged in different vocal practices, and rather than limit their experiences by asking them to choose one, I decided to explore their experiences with their voices holistically, and later concentrated on the themes that were shared for the specific vocal practice discussed. In other words, I had to negotiate the main practice based on which practice was most salient in their interview and whether they shared themes with other co-researchers who also engaged in that practice. For this reason, it would be interesting to see if other studies concerning these vocal practices would reproduce similar results. As it stands now, my subjectivity in this aspect of the research may reduce the confirmability of the research findings.

This study touched on the links between intention, judgement, and musical elitism. For the scope of this research, I was unable to make any clear lines about the roles of each and their

relationships with each other, which reduces the credibility of this finding. It would be useful if future research explored the role of these factors in people's experiences of voicework to test my results.

## **7.5: Finale**

This thesis offers a rich understanding of creative and embodied aspects of different vocal practices and develops knowledge about the voice's potential for healing and transformation. Through the experiences of eleven people, this study provides unique insight into the nature and meaning of the voice as a healing tool, bridging the singing for health and well-being field with the arts therapies and counselling and psychotherapy research. Through integrating PE theory and vocal creativity, I elaborated on Emotion Focused Therapy and the theoretical base for vocal practices, generating new understandings and implications for practice.

The findings indicate that vocal practices are an embodied means to access, express, process, and reflect on emotional experiences. Vocal creativity enabled self-expression and developed understanding of different parts of the self. The use of sound acted as a means to symbolise and transform emotion. The results suggest the power of sound to facilitate a sense of closeness in relationships, which may be useful for understanding ways of building empathetic attunement within the therapeutic relationship. As the voice appeared to be culturally situated, the people of this study have experienced many challenges in the process of expanding their voices as they confronted prescribed norms; however, with support and perseverance, they developed greater self-confidence and self-trust, and a stronger sense of inner freedom and empowerment.

Embracing the stories of the co-researchers, through both verbal language and the embodied expression of art, I have promoted the idea that our ways of coming to know

something about the life-world can be enriched by the contributions of art, the body, and the subjective. In this way, I have added to the conversation about how we may expand knowledge by offering more than logical or verbal forms of understanding and making meaning. Through this, I have attempted to re-define the ethics of the voice in counselling and psychotherapy research and practice. I have made this attempt by portraying lived experience with more than verbal language, led by my hope that researchers may continue to add to our palette of paint, richer, brighter colours with which to capture the intricacies and complexities of the life-world.

Through a heuristic process, the participants in this study had the opportunity to give voice to an embodied self. I have offered my experience in an ongoing journey toward greater growth and wholeness. The co-researchers in this study have told their stories of how they have grown to value themselves through the power of sound. Together, we have shared our challenges and the risks we took to establish a stronger sense of our voices amid others' voices that once limited or silenced our own. Our stories have exposed the contexts and conditions which limited or enabled fuller vocal expression. Through strength and personal transcendence, we have encountered ourselves and embraced both the mess of healing and the pride of telling our stories. I hope that this research inspires others to free their voices, to see where a journey through sound may take them, so that we may echo in shared understanding that all voices matter.

## References

- Alvin, J. (1975). *Music Therapy*. London: John Clare Books.
- American Music Therapy Association (AMTA). (2018). Retrieved 26 Mar. 2019 from  
<https://www.musictherapy.org/>
- Austin, D. (1996). The Role of Improvised Music in Psychodynamic Music Therapy with Adults. *Music Therapy* 14, 1, 29-43.
- Austin, D. (2007). Vocal Psychotherapy. (In Crowe, B. ed.) *Best Practice in Music Therapy for Adults, Adolescents and Children with Psychiatric Disabilities*. Silver Spring, MD: American Music Therapy Association.
- Austin, D. (2008). Music Therapy and Vocal Psychotherapy. (In Seki, N. ed.) *Creative Arts Therapy*. Language: Japanese. Tokyo, Japan: Film Art Publisher.
- Austin, D. (2016). Vocal Psychotherapy: Discovering Yourself through the Voice. In (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Music Therapy*.: Oxford University Press, Retrieved 10 Mar. 2019, from:  
<http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199639755.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199639755-e-4>.
- Austin, D. & Monti, E. (2018). The Dialogical Self in Vocal Psychotherapy. *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy*, 27(2), 158-169.
- Bailey, B. & Davidson, J. (2002). Adaptive Characteristics of Group Singing: Perceptions from Members of a Choir for Homeless Men. *Musicae Scientiae*, 6(2), 221-256.
- Bailey, B. & Davidson, J. (2003). Amateur Group Singing as a Therapeutic Instrument. *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy*, 12(1), 18-32.



- Bailey, B. & Davidson, J.W. (2005). Effects of group singing and performance for marginalized and middle-class singers. *Psychology of Music*, 33 (3), 269-303.
- Baines, S. (1992). *The Sociological and Political Contexts of Music Therapy: A Question of Ethics*. Unpublished master's thesis. New York University, New York.
- Baird, M. (2008). *Perceived Benefits of Choral Singing: Social, Intellectual, and Emotional Aspects of Group Singing*, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.
- Baker, F. & Uhlig, S. (2011). *Voicework in Music Therapy: Research and Practice*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Balsnes, A. (2012). Choral Singing, Health and Quality of Life: The Story of Diana. *Arts & Health*, 4(3), 1–13.
- Bamford, C. (2002). Introduction. In: Steiner, R. (ed.), *What is anthroposophy?*, pp. 1–32. Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks.
- Barbour, R. (2008). *Introducing Qualitative Research: A Student Guide to the Craft of Doing Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.
- Beck, R., Cesario, T., Yousefi, A. & Enamoto, H. (2000). Choral Singing, Performance Perception, and Immune System Changes in Salivary Immunoglobulin A and Cortisol. *Music Perception*, 18 (1), 87-106.
- Bindeman, S. (2016). *Merleau-Ponty, Bodily Knowledge and Felt Meaning*. Retrieved 26 Mar. 2019 from [http://www.hakomiinstitute.com/Forum/Issue28/2016\\_Hakomi\\_Forum\\_Bindeman.pdf](http://www.hakomiinstitute.com/Forum/Issue28/2016_Hakomi_Forum_Bindeman.pdf)
- Blaikie, N. W. H. (2010). *Designing Social Research: the Logic of Anticipation* (2nd ed.). Cambridge; Malden: Polity Press.
- Bondi, L., Wyatt, J., & Tamas, S. (2013). *Research and Therapy: Generating Meaning and*

- Feeling Gaps. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 19 (1), 9-19.
- Borenstein, S.S. (2007). *The Role of the Therapist in Dance/Movement Therapy with Children and in Family Dance/Movement Therapy with Children: A Qualitative Content Analysis of Literature*. Thesis, Drexel University, USA.
- Braud, W. & Anderson, R. (1998). *Transpersonal Research Methods for the Social Sciences: Honoring Human Experience*. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks CA.
- Bricki N. & Green J. (2007). *A Guide to Using Qualitative Research Methodology*. New York: Médecins Sans Frontières.
- British Society for Music Therapy (BSMT) (2004). *What Is Music Therapy?* Online. Available: [http://www.apmt.org/mt\\_whatismt.htm](http://www.apmt.org/mt_whatismt.htm) 26 Dec 2004. Retrieved 26 Mar. 2019.
- Brown, B. (2012). *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead*. New York City, NY: Gotham.
- Brownell, A. & Lewis, P. (1990). 'The Kestenberg Movement Profile in *Movement Profile: Its Past, Present Applications and Future Directions*. Keene: Antioch New England Graduate School.
- Bruscia, K.E. (1998). *A Survey of Treatment Procedures in Improvisational Music Therapy*. *Psychology of Music* 16:10–24.
- Bruun, E.F. (2015). Listen Carefully. *Dramatherapy*, 37:1, 3-14.
- Bryman, A. (2004). *Social research methods* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bunch, M. (1995). *Dynamics of the Singing Voice*. New York: Springer-Verlag Wien.

- Bunt, L. & Hoskyns, S. (2002). *The Handbook of Music Therapy*. Hove: Brunner-Routledge.
- Burgess, M. (2008). *A New Paradigm of Spirituality and Religion: Contemporary Shamanic Practice in Scotland* (Continuum advances in religious studies). London; New York: Continuum.
- Chaiklin, S., Lohn, A., & Sandel, S. L. (eds.). (1993). *Foundations of Dance/Movement Therapy: The Life and Work of Marian Chace*. Columbia, MD: The Marian Chace Memorial Fund of the American Dance Therapy Association.
- Clark, I. & Harding, K. (2012). Psychosocial Outcomes of Active Singing Interventions for Therapeutic Purposes: A Systematic Review of the Literature. *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy*, 21(1), 80–98.
- Clift, S. & Hancox, G. (2001). The Perceived Benefits of Singing: Findings from Preliminary Surveys of a University College Choir. *The Journal of the Royal Society for the Promotion of Health*, 121(4), 248-256.
- Clift, S. & Hancox, G. (2010). The Significance of Choral Singing for Sustaining Psychological Wellbeing: Findings from a Survey of Choristers in England, Australia and Germany. *Music Performance Research*, 3.1, 79-96.
- Clift, S., Camic, P. & von Lob, G. (2010). The Use of Singing as a Response to Adverse Life Events. *International Journal of Mental Health Promotion*, 12(3), 45-53.
- Clift, S. & Morrison, I. (2011). Group Singing Fosters Mental Health and Wellbeing: Findings from the East Kent “Singing for Health” Network Project. *Mental Health and Social Inclusion*, 15(2), 88-97.
- Crotty, M. (1998). *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process*. London: SAGE.

- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1997). *Finding Flow: The Psychology of Engagement with Everyday Life*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Curtis, S. (2000). *Singing s.Subversion, Singing Soul: Women's Voices in Feminist Music Therapy*. (Doctoral dissertation, Concordia University, 1997). Dissertation Abstracts International, 60 (12-A), 4240.
- Daykin, N., Mansfield, L., Meads, C., Julier, G., Tomlinson, A., Payne, A., Victor, C. (2018). What Works for Wellbeing? A Systematic Review of Wellbeing Outcomes for Music and Singing in Adults. *Perspectives in Public Health*, 138(1), 39-46.
- DeNora, T. (2000). *Music in Everyday Life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dillon, A., Greenberg, L. & Timulak, L. (2018). Transforming Core Emotional Pain in a Course of Emotion-focused Therapy for Depression: A Case Study. *Psychotherapy Research*, 28(3), 406-422.
- Dingle, G., Brander, C., Ballantyne, J., & Baker, F. (2013). 'To be heard': The social and mental health benefits of choir singing for disadvantaged adults. *Psychology of Music*, 41(4), 405-421.
- Douglass, B. E., & Moustakas, C. (1985). Heuristic Inquiry: The Internal Search to Know. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 25(3), 39-55.
- Durrant, C. & Himonides, E. (1998). What Makes People Sing Together? Socio-Psychological and Cross-Cultural Perspectives on the Choral Phenomenon. *International Journal of Music Education*, 32(1), 61–71. Retrieved 26 Mar. 2019 from <https://doi.org/10.1177/025576149803200106>.

- Edwards, D. (1998). Types of case study work: a conceptual framework for case-based research. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 38(3) 36- 70.
- Edwards, J. (2016). *The Oxford Handbook of Music Therapy* (1st ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Edwards, J., & Intveen, A. (2016). Rudolf Steiner and the development of Anthroposophical Music Therapy. In *The Oxford Handbook of Music Therapy* (p. The Oxford Handbook of Music Therapy, Chapter 3). Oxford University Press.
- Edwards, J., & Lee, C. (2016). Aesthetic Music Therapy. In *The Oxford Handbook of Music Therapy* (p. The Oxford Handbook of Music Therapy, Chapter 2). Oxford University Press.
- Edwards, J., & Metzner, S. (2016). Psychodynamic Music Therapy. In *The Oxford Handbook of Music Therapy* (p. The Oxford Handbook of Music Therapy, Chapter 8). Oxford University Press.
- Einarsdottir, S. & Gudmundsdottir, H. (2015). The Role of Choral Singing in the Lives of Amateur Choral Singers in Iceland. *Music Education Research*, 18(1), 1-18.
- Elliott, R. & Greenberg, L. (1997). Multiple Voices in Process-Experiential Therapy: Dialogues Between Aspects of the Self. *Journal of Psychotherapy Integration*, 7(3), 225-239.
- Elliott, R., Watson, J., Goldman, R., Greenberg, L. (2004). *Learning Emotion-focused Therapy: The Process-experiential Approach to Change* (First ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Etherington, K. (2004). Heuristic Research as a Vehicle for Personal and Professional Development. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*. 4, 2, 48-63.
- Eyre, L. (2011). Therapeutic chorale for persons with chronic mental illness: A descriptive survey of participant experiences. *Journal of Music Therapy*, 48(2), 149-168.

Finlay, L. (2002). Negotiating the Swamp: The Opportunity and Challenge of Reflexivity in Research Practice. *Qualitative Research*. 2 (2), 209-230.

Fitzmaurice Voicework. (2014). Accessed November 22, 2018.

<http://www.fitzmauricevoice.com/home.html>.

Fonagy, (1976). Spoken Language: Dynamic and Changing. *Journal de Psychologie Normale et Pathologique*. v73 i3-4. 273-304.

Freud, S. (1938). *An Outline of Psychoanalysis*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Freud, S. (1953-74). *The standard edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. James Strachey (ed) in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson. London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis.

Gadamer, H. (2004). *Truth and Method* (2nd ed.). London, England: Bloomsbury Academic.

Gendlin, E.T. (1962). *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning*. Chicago: Free Press.

Gendlin, E. T. (1973). Experiential Phenomenology. In M. Natanson (Ed.), *Phenomenology and the Social Sciences* (Vol. 1, pp. 281-319). Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Gendlin, E. T. (1978). *Focusing: How to Gain Direct Access to Your Body's Knowledge*. London: Rider.

Gendlin, E. T. (1991). Thinking Beyond Patterns: Body, Language, and Situations. In B. den Ouden & M. Moen (Eds.), *The Presence of Feeling in Thought* (pp. 21-151). New York: Peter Lang

Gendlin, E.T. (1992). The Primacy of the Body, Not the Primacy of Perception. in *Man and World*, Vol. 2-3: 341-53.

- Gendlin E.T. (1994). *The Primacy of Perception: An Ancient and Modern Mistake*. Unpublished
- Gendlin, E.T. (1997) [1962]. *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning: A Philosophical and Psychological Approach to the Subject*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press: manuscript.
- Gibran, K., & Bushrui, S. (2012). *The Prophet (New annotated ed., Twentieth Century Religious Thought, Volume II: Islam)*. Oxford, England: Oneworld Publications.
- Giddens, A. (1987). What Do Sociologists So? In A. Giddens, *Social Theory and Modern Sociology* (pp. 1-21). Cambridge, UK: Polity.
- Goodchild, C. (2015). *The Naked Voice: Transforming Your Life Through the Power of Sound*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.
- Grape, C., Sandgren, M., Hansson, L., Ericson, M., & Theorell, T. (2002). Does Singing Promote Well-being?: An Empirical Study of Professional and Amateur Singers During a Singing Lesson. *Integrative Physiological & Behavioral Science*, 38(1), 65-74.
- Gratier, M. (1999). Expressions of Belonging: The Effect of Acculturation on the Rhythm and Harmony of Mother-infant Vocal Interaction. *Musicae Scientiae*, 3 (1\_suppl), 93-122.
- Gratier, M. & Danon, A. (2009). Improvised Musicality of Belonging: Repetition and Variation in Mother–infant Vocal Interaction. In S. Malloch, C. Trevarthen (Eds.), *Communicative musicality: exploring the basis of human companionship*, Oxford University Press, Oxford (2009), pp. 301-32.
- Greenberg, L. (2002). *Emotion-focused Therapy: Coaching Clients to Work Through Their Feelings*. Washington DC: American Psychological Association.

- Greenberg, L. (2011). *Emotion-focused Therapy*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Greenberg, L. & Safran, J. (1987). Emotion in Psychotherapy: Affect, Cognition, and the Process of Change. *Guilford Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy series*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Greenberg, L. & Pascual-Leone, J. (1995). A Dialectical-constructivist Approach to Experiential Change. In Neimeyer, Robert A.; Mahoney, Michael J. *Constructivism in Psychotherapy*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. Pp. 169–194.
- Greenberg, L. & Paivio, S. (1997). Working with Emotions in Psychotherapy. *The Practicing Professional*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Greenberg, L. & Whelton, W. (2001). *The Self as a Singular Multiplicity: A Process-experiential Perspective* (pp. 87-106). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Guignon, C. (1983). *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge*. Indianapolis, IN Hackett.
- Guignon, C. (1993). *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*. New York: Cambridge.
- Hall, S. (2005). An Exploration of the Therapeutic Potential of Song in Dramatherapy. *Dramatherapy*, 27:1, 13-18, DOI: 10.1080/02630672.2005.9689644
- Halstrup, I. (2015). To the Bones - and through: The Discipline of Authentic Movement and Voice Work. *Journal of Dance & Somatic Practices*, 7(2), 287-298.
- Harré R. (1972). *The Philosophies of Science*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Heidegger, M. (1967). *Being and time*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Heineman, M. (1982). *A Study of Career Aspirations and Perceived Career Success in Female*



- and Male Registered Music Therapists*. Unpublished master's thesis, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL.
- Hermans, H. & Dimaggio, G. (2004). *The Dialogical Self in Psychotherapy*. Hove: Brunner-Routledge.
- Hiles, D. (2001). *Heuristic Inquiry and Transpersonal Research*. Retrieved January 13, 2018, from <http://www.psy.dmu.ac.uk/drhiles/HIpaper.html>.
- Hitt, L. (2005). Dark Voices: The Genesis of Roy Hart Theatre by Noah Pikes. *Voice and Speech Review*, 4(1), 390.
- Husserl, E. & Cairns, D. (1977). *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology* (Sixth impression.ed.). The Hague: M. Nijhoff.
- Hyatt, R. (2011). Heuristic Research: Design, Methodology, and Applications. *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical*, 38(3), 71-74.
- Jennings, S. (2011). *Healthy Attachments and Neuro-Dramatic-Play*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Johnson, D.R. (1981). "Some Diagnostic Implications of Drama Therapy" in *Drama in Therapy Vol. 2: Adults*. Eds. Schattner, G. & Courtney, R. Drama Book Specialists, New York.
- Joyce, V. (1993). *Singing for Our Lives: Women Creating Home through Singing*, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.
- Jung, C. (1958). *The Collected Works of CG Jung*, vol. 5, pp. 12-13.
- Karkou, V., & Sanderson, P. (2006). *Arts Therapies: A Research-based Map of the Field*. Edinburgh; New York: Elsevier Churchill Livingstone.

Karkou, Vassiliki, Sue Oliver, and Sophia Lycouris. *The Oxford Handbook of Dance and Wellbeing*. New York, NY: Oxford UP, 2017. Print.

Kiesinger, C. (1998). From Interview to Story: Writing Abbie's Life. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 4(1), 71-95.

Knight, A. (1993). "A Group Singing Warm-up with the Chronic Mentally Ill." in *Journal of Group Psychotherapy, Psychodrama & Sociometry*, Vol46, pp 74-75

Knoblauch, S.H., (2000). *The Musical Edge of Therapeutic Dialogue*. Hillsdale, NJ: The Analytic Press.

Kreutz, G., Bongard, S., Rohrmann, S., Hodapp, V., & Grebe, D. (2004). Effects of Choir Singing or Listening on Secretory Immunoglobulin A, Cortisol, and Emotional State. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 27(6), 623-635. Bricki, N. & Green, J. (2007). *A Guide to Using Qualitative Research Methodology*.

Krichman, Y. (2014). *The Somatic Dimensions of Artistic Creativity: How Somatically Literate Artists Experience the Soma's Role in Creativity*, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

Laban, R. (1960). *The Mastery of Movement*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. London: McDonald and Evans.

Langford, J. & Clance, P. (1993). The Impostor Phenomenon: Recent Research Findings Regarding Dynamics, Personality and Family Patterns and Their Implications for Treatment. *Psychotherapy*, 30, 495-501.

Levin, D. (1997). *Language Beyond Postmodernism. Saying and Thinking in Gendlin's Philosophy*. Evanston Ill: Northwestern U. Press

- Levy, F. J. (2005). *Dance movement therapy: A healing art*. Reston, VA: American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance
- Lincoln, Y. & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Newbury Park, Calif.; London: Sage.
- Linnemann, A., Schnersch, A., Nater, U., & Kreutz, G. (2017). Testing the Beneficial Effects of Singing in a Choir on Mood and Stress in a Longitudinal Study: The Role of Social Contacts. *Musicae Scientiae*, 21(2), 195-212.
- Litawa, A. (2018). Amateur Choral Singing and its Implications for the Emotional Sphere of Adult Life – A Case Study. *Leisure Studies*, 1-7.
- Lonsdale, A. & Stewart, N. (2016). It's Better Together: The Psychological Benefits of Singing in a Choir. *Psychology of Music*, 44(6), 1240-1254.
- Lowen, A. (1976). *Biogenetics*. London: Penguin.
- Madison, G. (2008). Focusing, Intersubjectivity, and "Therapeutic Intersubjectivity". *Existential Analysis*, 19(1), 58.
- Maslow, A. (1971). *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature*. New York: Viking.
- Mason, J. (2002). *Qualitative Researching* (2nd ed.). London; Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Matua, A. & Van Der Wal, D. M. (2015). Differentiating Between Descriptive and Interpretive Phenomenological Research Approached. *Nurse Researcher*, 22(6), 22-27.
- McLeod, J. (2015). *Doing Research in Counselling and Psychotherapy* (Third ed.). London: SAGE.
- McNiff, S. (1993). The authority of experience. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 20, 3-9.
- McNiff, S. (1998). *Art-based research*. London: Jessica Kingsley.

- Meekums, B. (2002). *Dance Movement Therapy: A Creative Psychotherapeutic Approach (Creative Therapies in Practice)*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.; London: SAGE.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1964). *The Primacy of Perception and Other Essays*. Edited with an Introduction by J. Edie. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
- Merriam, S.B. (1998). *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Mettler, B. (1985). *Dance as an Element of Life*. Tuscon, Arizona: Mettler Studios Inc.
- Moore Meigs, M. (1992) 'Voicework'. *Self and Society*, XX, 1.
- Moore Meigs, M. (1994). 'Voicework' in D. Jones (ed.) *Innovative Therapy: A Handbook*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Morgan, M. K. (2012). *Constructing the Holistic Actor: Fitzmaurice Voicework®*. Printed in USA: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform. ISBN –13: 978166258655.
- Moses, P.J. (1954). *The Voice of Neurosis*. New York: Grune and Stratton.
- Moustakas, C. E. (1990). *Heuristic Research Design, Methodology, and Applications*. Newbury Park, Calif.; London: SAGE. Web.
- Natan, E. (2011). The voice of dramatherapy: Fragments of voice work with a group of dramatherapists according to the Sesame approach. *Dramatherapy*, 33(1), 28-44.
- Newham, P. (1999). Voicework as therapy: The Artistic Use of Singing and Vocal Sound to Heal Mind and Body. In Levine, S. & Levine, E. (eds.), *Foundations of expressive arts Therapy: Theoretical and Clinical Perspectives* (pp. 89-112). Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley.

Newham, P. (1997). *The Prophet of Song: The Life and Work of Alfred Wolfsohn*. London.

Tigers Eye Press.

Newham, P. (1998). *Therapeutic Voicework*. London: Jessica Kingsley.

Nordoff, P. & Robbins, C. (1971). *Therapy in Music for Handicapped Children*. London: Victor

Gollancz. .

Oddy, N. (2011). A Field of Vocal Discovery: The Workshop. In F. Baker & S. Uhlig (Eds.),

*Voicework in music therapy* (pp. 83-99). London, England: Jessica Kingsley.

Panhofer, H. (2011). Languaged and Non-languaged Ways of Knowing in Counselling and

Psychotherapy, *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 39:5, 455-470, DOI:

10.1080/03069885.2011.621524

Patteson, A. (2000). *Singing a Woman's Life: How Singing Lessons Transformed the Lives of*

*Nine Women* (Unpublished master's thesis). Queen's University, Kingston, Canada.

Patton, M. (1980). *Qualitative Evaluation Methods*. Beverly Hills; London: Sage.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks;

London: Sage.

Payne, H. (2006). *Dance Movement therapy: Theory, Research and Practice* (Second ed.).

London: Routledge.

Polanyi, M. (1964). *Science, Faith, and Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago

Polanyi, M. (1966). *The Tacit Dimension*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Polanyi, M. (1969). *Knowing and Being* (M. Grene, Ed.), Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Porter, R. (2014). "Movement with Touch and Sound in the Sesame Approach: Bringing the Bones to the Flesh". *Dramatherapy* 36 (1): 27–42.
- Priestley, M. (1975). *Music Therapy in Action*. London: Constable and Company.
- Priestley, M. (1994). *Essays on Analytical Music Therapy*. Phoenixville, PA: Barcelona Publishers.
- Rappaport, L. (2010). Focusing-Oriented Art Therapy: Working with Trauma / *Focusing-Person-Centered & Experiential Psychotherapies*, 9(2), 128-142.
- Reagon, Gale, Enright, Mann, & Van Deursen. (2016). A Mixed-method Systematic Review to Investigate the Effect of Group Singing on Health-Related Quality of Life. *Complementary Therapies in Medicine*, 27, 1-11.
- Reich, W. (1948). *Character Analysis* (3<sup>rd</sup> edn). London: Vision Press.
- Rogers, C. (1959). A Theory of Therapy, Personality and Interpersonal Relationships as Developed in the Client-centered Framework. In Koch, S. (ed.) *Psychology: A Study of a Science. Vol. 3: Formulations of the Person and the Social Context*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Rogers, C. R. (1985). Toward a More Human Science of the Person. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 25 (4), 7-24.
- Rogers, N. (1993). *The Creative Connection*. Palo Alto, CA: Science & Behavior Books.
- Rust-D'Eye, A. (2013). The Sounds of the Self: Voice and Emotion in Dance/movement

- Therapy. *Body, Movement and Dance in Psychotherapy*, 8 (2), 95-107.
- Sandel, S. L. & Hollander, A. Scott (1995). Dance/Movement Therapy with Aging Populations. In: Levy, F.J., ed. (1995). *Dance and Other Expressive Art Therapies: When Words are not Enough*. Reston, VA (USA): American Alliance for Health, Physical Education and Dance, pp. 133-143.
- Sauvé, M. L. (2004). *The Therapeutic Effects of Vocal Improvisation* (Unpublished master's thesis). Carlton University, Ottawa, Canada.
- Scherer, K.R., Ladd, D.R. and Silverman, K.E.A. (1984). Vocal Cues to Speaker Affect: Testing Two Models. *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, 76, 1346–1356.
- Scherer, K. & Bergmann, G. (1990). 'Vocal Communication'. *German Journal of Psychology*, 8, 57-90.
- Schneider, K. (1999). Multiple-case depth research: Bringing experience-near closer. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 55(12), 1531-40.
- Silber, L. (2005). Bars behind bars: The impact of a women's prison choir on social harmony, *Music Education Research*, 7 (2), 251-271.
- Silverman, D. (2010). *Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook* (3rd ed.). London: Sage.
- Small, C. (1998). *Musicking*. Hannover, NH: University Press of New England.
- Sokolov, L. (1987). Vocal Improvisation Therapy. In Bruscia, K. (ed.), *Improvisational Models of Music Therapy* (pp. 353-359). Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.
- Sokolov, L. (2012). Embodied Voicework: Moving Toward Wholeness in the Musical Field of Play. In S. Wirth, I. Meier & J. Hill (Eds.), *The Playful Psyche: Entering Chaos, Coincidence, Creation* (pp. 107-120). New Orleans, LA: Spring Journal Books.

- Stark, A. & Lohn, A.F. (1989). "The Use of Verbalization in Dance/movement Therapy." *The Arts in Psychotherapy* 16.2: 105-13. Web.
- Steiner Çelebi, M. (2006). Birth Moves: Dance Movement Therapy and Holistic Birth Preparation. In: Payne, H., ed. (2006). *Dance Movement Therapy. Theory, Research and Practice*. Routledge.
- Steiner Çelebi, M. (2009). Pain Relief in Labour. From Internet URL <http://www.ymte.co.uk/PainReliefInLabour.pdf> (retrieved 1-Mar-2009)
- Steiner, G. (1996). *Martin Heidegger*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Stiles, W. (1999). Signs and Voices in Psychotherapy. *Psychotherapy Research*, 9, 1-21.
- Storr, A. (1993). Forward. In: Heal, M, Wigram, T (eds.) *Music Therapy in Health and Education*. London: Jessica Kingsley
- Summers, S. (1999). *A Tapestry of Voices: Community Building with a Geriatric Choir Reflected in a Music Therapy Model of Practice* (Unpublished master's thesis). Open University, Burnaby, Canada.
- Summers, S. (2014). *Portraits of Vocal Psychotherapists: Singing as a Healing Influence for Change and Transformation*, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.
- Tonneijck, H., Kinebanian, A., & Josephsson, S. (2008). Exploration of Choir Singing: Achieving Wholeness Through Challenge. *Journal of Occupational Science*, 15(2), 173-180.
- Uhlig, S. (2006). *Authentic Voices, Authentic Singing: A Multicultural Approach to Vocal Music Therapy*. Gilsum, N.H.: Barcelona.



- Unwin, M., Kenny, D., & Davis, P. (2002). The Effects of Group Singing on Mood. *Psychology of Music*, 30(2), 175-185.
- Valle, R., King, M. & Halling, S. (1989). An Introduction to Existential-phenomenological Thought in Psychology. In R. Valle & S. Halling (Eds.), *Existential-phenomenological Perspective in Psychology* (pp. 3-16). New York: Plenum Press.
- van Manen, M. (2011). Epistemology of Practice. *Phenomenology Online*. Retrieved March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019 from <http://www.phenomenologyonline.com/inquiry/epistemology---of---practice/>
- van Manen, M. (1997). *Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy*. London, Canada: Althouse.
- Wadsworth Hervey, L. (2000). *Artistic Inquiry in Dance/movement Therapy*. Creative Alternatives for Research. Springfield: Charles C. Thomas Publisher.
- Watson, L., and S. Nayak. (2014). "Fitzmaurice Voicework: Theory, Practice, and Related Research." *Voice and Speech Review* 8 (2): 149–156. doi:10.1080/23268263.2014.906968.
- West, W. (2001). Beyond Grounded Theory: The Use of a Heuristic Approach to Qualitative Research. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*. 1, 2, 126-131.
- Whittemore, K. (1998). *The Effect of Singing on Blood Pressure* (Unpublished master's thesis). University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah.
- Wilber, K. (1995). *Sex, Ecology, and Spirituality*. Boston: Shambala.
- Wilber, K. (1996). *A Brief History of Everything*. Boston: Shambala.
- Wilber, K. (1997). *The Eye of Spirit*. Boston: Shambala.

- Williams, C. & Stevens K. (1972). Emotions and Speech: Some Acoustical Correlates. *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, 52(4B), 1238-1250.
- Winnicott, D. (1971). *Playing and reality*. London: Tavistock Publications.
- Winnicott, D. (1953). Psychoses and Child Care. *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, 26(1), 68-74.
- Winnicott, D. (1971). *Playing and Reality*. London: Tavistock Publications.
- Woolfolk, R. (1992). Hermeneutics, Social Constructionism and Other Items of Intellectual Fashion: Intimations for Clinical Science. *Behavior Therapy*, 23(2), 213-223.
- Yilmaz, K. (2013). Comparison of Quantitative and Qualitative Research Traditions: Epistemological, Theoretical, and Methodological Differences. *European Journal of Education* 48(2): 311–325.

## **List of Appendices**

The following documents and overviews are enclosed as appendices:

Appendix A: Information Sheet for Facilitators and Participants of the ‘Rooted in Our Voice’  
Workshop

Appendix B: Information Sheet for the Attendees at ‘The Naked Voice Adventure’ Workshop

Appendix C: Therapist Interview Guide & Consent Form

**Appendix A: Information Sheet for Facilitators and Participants of the  
'Rooted in Our Voice' Workshop, Held on March 16, 2017, in Edinburgh**

Research project title: *Experiences of Healing: Exploring the Relationship Between the Voice, Creativity and the Self.*

*Study Information:*

As a participant in the 'Rooted in Our Voice' workshop, I will deeply reflect on my internal experience, gaining insight into my research questions concerning what it is about voicing that is healing for me. I also take in the external experience to help me understand the relationship between the self, creativity and the voice. I also extend an invitation to other attendees who would like share their experiences of vocalising as a healing and transformational influence in their life.

*What is the purpose of the study?*

The purpose of this study is to explore singers' and non-singers' experiences of voicework as healing and transformational. I am classifying non-singers as those who do not identify as singers (or have not done so in the past). I am curious as to what this can tell us about the voice's relationship to the self. I will attempt to answer questions around how using the voice in all its forms is healing and how healing and transformation can occur through singing in the context of individuals' personal history.

*Confidentiality:*

All data for analysis will remain anonymous. There will be no possibility of you as an individual being linked with the data. All data collected will be protected within the university's secure database.

*What will happen to the results of the study?*

The results of the study may be analysed within my doctoral dissertation and included in conference presentations and possible publications.

*Whom should I contact for further information?*

If you have any questions or require more information about this study, please contact me using the following details:

Sarah Quinley

[s1462809@ed.ac.uk](mailto:s1462809@ed.ac.uk)

07983219473

School of Health and Social Science

University of Edinburgh

Research supervisor: Alette Willis [willis@ed.ac.uk](mailto:willis@ed.ac.uk)

## **Appendix B: Information Sheet for the Attendees at ‘The Naked Voice Adventure’ Workshop, Held on September 25th, 2017, in Edinburgh.**

### INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

Research project title: *Song’s Relationship to Self: A Qualitative Study to Explore Singers’ and Non-singers’ Experiences of Singing as Healing and Transformational.*

#### *Study Information:*

Today I will join you in the ‘Naked Voice Adventure’ workshop as a participant and a researcher. I am interested in using this workshop as a way to recruit interviewees and to reflect on my own experience of my voice in order to address my research questions.

#### *What is the purpose of the study?*

The purpose of this study is to explore singers’ and non-singers’ experiences of singing as healing and transformational and the singing voice’s relationship to the self. I am classifying non-singers as those who do not identify as singers. I will attempt to answer questions around how singing is healing and how healing and transformation could occur through singing in the context of individuals’ personal history. It is my hope that this workshop may begin to shed some light on some of these questions.

#### *Confidentiality:*

Your participation in this workshop and your possible inclusion in my research will be strictly anonymous and confidential. If you are included in my personal reflections, your name and identifying details will be held securely both during the research and after it is finished. All data for analysis will remain anonymous and you will not be asked to provide your name, address or any contact details at this time. There will be no possibility of you as an individual being linked with the data. All data collected will be protected within the university’s secure database.

*What will happen to the results of the study?*

The results of the study may form part of my research and may be analysed within my doctoral dissertation.

*Whom should I contact for further information?*

If you have any questions or require more information about this study, please contact me using the following details:

Sarah Quinley

[s1462809@ed.ac.uk](mailto:s1462809@ed.ac.uk)

School of Health and Social Science

University of Edinburgh

Research supervisor: Alette Willis

Tel: [+44 \(0\)131 650 3881](tel:+441316503881)

E-mail: [a.willis@ed.ac.uk](mailto:a.willis@ed.ac.uk)

## **Appendix C: Interviewee Information Sheet, Consent Form, & Questions**

### **Guide for the Conversational Interviews**

#### **Information Sheet**

Researcher:

Research Participant's name:

#### *About the Project*

The purpose of this study is to explore singers' and non-singers' experiences of voicework as healing and transformational. I am classifying non-singers as those who do not identify as singers. This also includes if you haven't identified as a singer in the past. I am curious as to what your experience can tell us about the voice's relationship to the self. I will attempt to answer questions around how using the voice in all its forms is healing and how healing and transformation can occur through voicework in the context of individuals' personal history. My principal aim is to draw out themes and make-meaning out of the stories that research participants share in order to gain insight into innovative ways of working for counselling and psychotherapy practice. The information you contribute may be part of my doctoral dissertation, along with conference presentations and possible publications.

#### *Who is responsible for the data collected in this study?*

I, Sarah Quinley, am a doctorate student at the School of Health and Social Sciences at the University of Edinburgh, and I will be responsible for the data that is collected through the interviews. The data I collect will be through semi-structured interviews, which means that informants influence the structuring of the content and form of their material.

The recorded interviews will be stored in the university's protected drive along with any transcriptions. Any identifiers of the participants will be held within this protected file. These



interviews will also be completely voluntary and individuals can give me written consent for their participation in this study. Consent forms will be separate from the data to ensure further protection of participants' identities. Confidentiality and consent will be ongoing, in that the participants will have the right to opt out of the study at any time should they decide to do so before I engage in my analysis in December, 2017. The research was reviewed and passed by the School of Health and Social Science Ethic Committee in Sept, 2017.

### *Follow-Up*

The final study will be sent to you upon request after its completion. Please sign if you would like a copy sent to you.

Participant's signature:

✕

---

### **Interview Consent Form**

Research project title: *Experiences of Healing: Exploring the Relationship Between the Voice, Creativity and the Self.*

Research investigator: Sarah Quinley

Research Participant's name:

The interview will take 50 minutes (about 10 minutes for each question; however, this is flexible). Interview questions will ask about how your voice has been healing within the context of your personal history, whereby you may possibly wish to share experiences that were personally vulnerable or painful. You have my support before and throughout the interview, meaning you can tell me if you wish to stop the interview or withdraw from the research should

you need to. I have attached an interview questions guide to give you an idea of some questions I may ask.

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of the above research project. This consent form is necessary for me to ensure that you understand the purpose of your involvement and that you agree to the conditions of your participation. Please therefore read the accompanying information sheet and then sign this form to certify that you approve the following:

- the interview will be recorded, and a transcript will be produced
- you will be sent the transcript and given the opportunity to correct any factual errors
- the transcript of the interview will be analysed by Sarah Quinley as research investigator
- access to the interview anonymized transcript will be limited to Sarah Quinley and academic colleagues with whom she might collaborate as part of the research process
- any summary interview content, or direct quotations from the interview, that are made available through academic publication or other academic outlets will be anonymized so that you cannot be identified, and care will be taken to ensure that other information in the interview that could identify yourself is not revealed
- the actual recording will be destroyed when it is no longer needed for the research or to validate the research results. Sarah Quinley will securely destroy personal data no earlier than four months and no later than six months after she has been notified that the Board of Examiners has confirmed her mark for this particular piece of work.
- any variation of the conditions above will only occur with your further explicit approval

With regards to being quoted, please initial next to any of the statements that you agree with:

	I wish to review the transcripts during the research pertaining to my participation and before the researcher begins analysis in December 2017.
--	---

	I agree to be quoted directly if my name is not published and a made-up name (pseudonym) is used.
--	---

By signing this form, you agree that;

1. You are voluntarily taking part in this project. You understand that you don't have to take part and you can stop the interview at any time;
2. The transcribed interview or extracts from it may be used in Sarah Quinley's doctoral dissertation, conference presentations and possible publications;
3. You have read the Information sheet;
4. You don't expect to receive any benefit or payment for your participation;
5. You can request a copy of the transcript of your interview and may make edits you feel necessary to ensure the effectiveness of any agreement made about confidentiality;
6. You have been able to ask any questions you might have, and you understand that you are free to contact the researcher with any questions you may have in the future.

Interview Consent Form School Health and Social Sciences – Ethics Committee – 2017

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Researchers Signature: Sarah Quinley Date 25/10/2017

### *Contact Information*

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Edinburgh University Research Ethics Board. If you have any further questions or concerns about this study, please contact:

Name of researcher: Sarah Quinley

Tel: +44 (0) 798 321 9473

E-mail: [s1462809@ed.ac.uk](mailto:s1462809@ed.ac.uk)

You can also contact Sarah Quinley's supervisor, Alette Willis

Tel: [+44 \(0\)131 650 3881](tel:+44(0)1316503881)

E-mail: [a.willis@ed.ac.uk](mailto:a.willis@ed.ac.uk)

To report complaints, contact Charlotte Clarke, head of school

Tel: +44 (0)131 650 4327

[charlotte.clarke@ed.ac.uk](mailto:charlotte.clarke@ed.ac.uk)

Interview Questions Guide (please fill-out first two questions prior to interview)

How do you define healing?

How do you define transformation?

What has been your relationship to your voice?

What about the experience of using your voice stands out for you? What examples are vivid and alive?

What has your experience of your voice been like throughout your life?

What feelings or thoughts are generated by your experience of singing and voicework?

What time and space factors affect your awareness and meaning of your experience of your voice?

What bodily states or shifts in body presence occur in your experience of using your voice?

How do you experience singing and voicework as a healing and/or transformational influence?

Do you feel that you shared all the significant ingredients or constituents of the experience?